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THE NOVICE OF SAINT DOMINICK.

BY

MISS OWENSON,

AUTHOR OF ST. CLAIR.

For *Truth* and *Good* are one,
And Beauty dwells in them, and they in her,
With like participation. *Akenside.*

Forse se tu gustasse anco una volta,
La milissima parte delle Geoje,
Che gusto un core amato riamando,
Aireste repentita Sospirando,
Perdutto e tutto il tempo,
Che, in amor non se spenda. *Tasso.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE

NOVICE OF ST. DOMINICK.

CHAP. XII.

One part, one little part, we dimly scan
Thro' the dark medium of life's feverish dream,
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem;
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem.
Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise:
Oh! then renounce that impious self esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies;
For thou art but of dust—be humble, and be wise.

Minstrel, B. I.

Recordivi che'l primo dolce peso
Fui de le vostre braccia e prima io n'hebbe
I cari baci e vi gli diede spesso.

Iphigenia.—DOLCE.

IT was the trumpet's warlike blast, the martial clang of arms, the deep-toned word of command, echoing from rank to rank, that roused Imogen from the sweets of obliviating repose. She started from her pillow; recollection slowly returned,

and the events of the preceding night, the circumstance of her present situation, floated "like half-forgotten dreams" in her mind.

While she was still engaged in disentangling her ideas from the confusion in which they were involved, a woman entered the apartment. She introduced herself as the wife of a soldier, whom the count had sent to offer her services. The form of a female was a grateful object to the eyes of Imogen; and, while the woman officiously assisted at her simple toilet, Imogen thankfully accepted her services. This military female was in every sense of the word a Frenchwoman, free, communicative, and unreserved, and not a little curious as to the disguise of the fair prisoner; to whom she related a long story of a lady who had got into the camp in a soldier's dress to see her knight the evening before the battle of Ivri. Imogen, laughingly, assured her that that had not been the object of her disguise; and, pleased

with her garrulity, chatted to her with that fascinating condescension which ever wins on the heart of humble inferiority.

As soon as she had finished the very necessary and refreshing duties of the toilet, her attendant retired, and in a few minutes a page entered to inform her the count waited breakfast for her in the outward apartment. Thither Imogen followed him. The count was leaning pensively over the back of a chair, on which his helmet and sword were laid. A few grey locks, no longer confined by the pressure of the weighty casque, played on a forehead more strongly marked with the traces of care than the furrows of age; and in his countenance was that mingled expression of benevolence and melancholy which evinced that he had learnt to appreciate the sufferings of others by his own; and that the beneficent impulses of his heart were confirmed by the suggestion of his own internal feelings.

When Imogen entered, he started and

gazed on her with little less emotion than he had done the preceding night; till observing the modest confusion with which her eyes avoided his, he approached, and, taking her hand with paternal familiarity, enquired how she had passed the night, with more solicitude than ceremony; then, having dismissed the page, drew a chair for her, and seated himself beside her with the easy freedom of an old acquaintance. Imogen already forgot that he in fact was not so: while the count pressed her to partake of a camp's homely fare, Imogen attempted to express the emotions of gratitude his kindness had awakened; but her's was not a heart to cherish feelings capable of expression; and the sigh that died on her lip, the tear that swam in her eye, was the only eloquence that nature gave them.

"And why these tears?" said the count, taking her hand; "flow they from "the recollection of sufferings sustained, "or from an apprehension of dangers yet "to come? Has the spirit of enthusiasm

" which characterizes these times betrayed
" thee into an adventure beyond thy
" powers to encounter? or has a softer
" cause than that of party spirit or fancied
" loyalty led thee to adopt this disguise
" and brave the vigilance of our guards?"

" No, my lord," said Imogen, " these
" are not tears of apprehension or regret,
" but such as the full heart sends to the
" eye when words fail to express its feel-
" ings: had you been less kind, they had
" flowed perhaps, but not from so sweet a
" cause."

The count seemed still to hang upon the sound of her voice for some minutes after it had ceased to vibrate; then he emphatically exclaimed: " That sweet voice of
" thine, fair mysterious stranger, breathes
" no unknown accent on my ear: it speaks
" peace to my heart; it revives each dor-
" mant power of joyous emotion, and
" sheds upon my retreating life the faint
" reflection of that *sun* which beamed
" upon its dawn, Speak! who and what

" art thou, that cometh thus endued with " magic spell to wake the dead to life, " and pour a flood of transient joy upon " a heart whose every spring of happiness " has long since been exhausted ?" Then, observing the effect his singular emotion had produced in the astonished countenance of his guest, he added faintly; " But " forgive me, lady; my feelings are my " masters; even at this age they lead me " where they will; and your strong re- " semblance of a person who—is no more— " might well rouse them to their wildest " excess of tyranny! But when I request " some account of my fair prisoner, it is " to save her that publicity of detail I am " sure she would shrink from encounter- " ing; for the report of a female spy of " some rank having been taken prisoner " last night has already circulated through " the camp."

There was an inexpressible something in the air, the looks, and voice, of the count de St. Dorval that would have won unli-

mited confidence from the narrow heart of distrust itself; and the all-confiding, sanguine character of Imogen dilated to the sympathetic influence of her illustrious host's candid and ingenuous manners. With brief simplicity she related her little story, slightly touching on her aversion to the life to which she had been devoted; and relating those adventures which had marked her flight from the chateau de Montmorell, and preceded her having been taken a prisoner, with undeviating accuracy. She then presented the packet, addressed to the lady de Rosemont, to whom she was recommended, in proof of the veracity of her detail.

The interest which the count took in her simple narration betrayed itself in his countenance; and amazement stole on the admiration of his gaze as she pronounced the name of de Rosemont, and presented him the packet.

"Madame de Rosemont!" he repeated; "and who recommended thee, sweet fugi-"*tive, to her* protection."

" The minor canoness of St Dominick,
" my lord."

" The minor canoness of St. Dominick!
" Merciful God! and knew you the ca-
" noness? and were *you* at the convent of
" St. Dominick."

" The minor canoness of St. Domi-
" nick," said Imogen, wiping away a tear,
" was my only friend; and recollection
" goes not so far back as to my entrance
" at the convent of St. Dominick."

" Who were thy parents?" demanded the count eagerly.

" I never knew them," replied Imogen feelingly. " Deserted by them in my in-
" fancy, I was received at the wheel of St.
" Dominick, and reared on the charitable
" institution of the order."

" And was there no article of dress, no
" circumstance, that could lead to the dis-
" covery of your friends?" asked the count in a voice scarcely articulate.

" None," said Imogen, infected with his emotion; " a coarse veil was wrapt
" *round my infant* form; and this cross,

" which was suspended round my neck,
" bore no mark but the initials of the saint
" to whom I was devoted, and on the re-
" verse the name of *Imogen*, by which
" name the abbess had me baptised."

" Shew me that cross," said the count faintly. Imogen loosened it from her neck, and presented it with a hand almost as tremblingas that which was eagerly stretched out to receive it. The count gazed on it till his glazed eye dropt tears ; then almost breathless with agitation he inarticulately exclaimed : " Lady, eighteen years
" ago this cross was fastened round the
" neck of my only child. Merciful
" heaven, mock not my hopes ! Yet, oh
" my heart, lie still ! That child bore on
" her cheek and just beneath her left tem-
" ple a singular mark ; it was indelible ;
" not the effect of accident, but born with
" her."

" Was it—such—as this ?" faintly, tremblingly, exclaimed Imogen, falling instinctively at the count's feet, and raising those

luxuriant tresses which shaded her temple; "was it such as this?"

Agitated almost to dissolution, panting, breathless, the count's eyes rolled in silence on the mark; then were raised to heaven with an expression of hope, gratitude, and ecstacy; while with a sigh that seemed to rend his heart he faintly exclaimed: "God "ofomnipotence! my child!" and stretching forward to receive her in his arms, fell lifeless on the earth.

Imogen sunk on the bosom of her new-found father, and the shriek that escaped her lips brought the Squire and page into the apartment.

Amazed at the scene which presented itself, and suspecting that the disguised prisoner was the cause of the situation in which they found their apparently lifeless lord, instead of giving him the assistance he required, they rudely seized the prostrate Imogen; who, clinging to the count, faintly exclaimed, "My father! oh my "father!" The tone of her voice reached

the faintly throbbing heart of the count, and stole with renovating influence on his senses. Imogen raised his drooping head on her bosom; and, bathing his hands with her tears, softly demanded, "Am I indeed "thy child?" The count clasped her hands in his, fixed his ardent gaze on her face, and, while his looks of melting tenderness lingered on every feature, and dwelt with tender curiosity and amazement on every lineament, he faintly exclaimed, "My child! my long-lost child!" then with a deep-drawn sigh caught her to his breast, and wept over her in silence: while Imogen, as if lost in sweet illusions of a delightful dream, from which she dreaded to awake, mingled her tears with his.

Mean time the domestics gazed on the affecting scene in an amazement which for some minutes deprived them of the power of motion or of speech. The squire, who had been for twenty years the humble companion of the count St. Dorval, looked earnestly at Imogen, and in a tone of re-

cognition exclaimed: "Holy Mother! "sure it is the countess herself;" while the count, who was now seated on a couch, pointed to Imogen, and, addressing the squire, in an affecting tone exclaimed: "*Richambaut*, hast thou ne'er seen a form "and face like that?"

"Not, my lord," said the squire, "since "I beheld the countess de St. Dorval."

"Behold her daughter!" said the count, with an air of mingled exultation and delight.

Richambaut fell at Imogen's feet, and respectfully kissed the trembling hand extended to raise him.

"Since I have lived to see this day," said the old man with tears, "I have lived "long enough." Then with a delicacy that intimated no common mind he withdrew with the page, checking the ardent curiosity of his affectionate solicitude till the first flush of emotion had subsided in the bosom of his lord; of whose sufferings he had long been the witness, of whose transports he could well judge.

While Imogen, confused, bewildered, transported, hung on the shoulder of her father, the count, still gazing on her, seemed as if every sense was absorbed in the contemplation of her face and figure; then drawing her towards him he energetically exclaimed: " Oh! I could not " be deceived! thy first glance sunk to " my soul, and rekindled the sacred flame " nature illumined in my heart, when in " thy sainted mother's circling arms I first " beheld thee, smiling like a seraph on " her nurturing bosom! Thy first accents " spoke to my heart in thy mother's well- " remembered tones, and its ardent pal- " pitation acknowledged thee her child, " her long-lost, long-lamented child!" Then dropping on one knee, and raising the clasped hands of Imogen in his, he exclaimed in a tone awful, affecting, and impressive: " Eternal disposer of the uni- " verse! receive the grateful offerings of " two hearts, who, by the fatherly interposi- " tion of thy providential care, are restored

" to happiness and to each other." And while words of pious gratitude murmured on his quivering lips he embraced his kneeling child, raised her in his arms, and implored a blessing on her head.

The benediction of a father for the first time breathed on the ear and sunk to the heart of Imogen: she felt it was a *father* pronounced it, and felt she was his child. The various and powerful feelings of her agitated heart seemed to have reached their climax of emotion: she fixed her eyes on the count's face till they were glazed with tears; a convulsive laugh of ecstacy burst from her lips: " Then I have a father!" she wildly exclaimed, and sunk motionless, though not insensible, on his shoulder.

" You have, you have!" exclaimed, the count, pressing her to his heart, while a warm tear fell on her cheek: that tear was the sweet cordial administered by nature, and the fading senses of Imogen revived to its influence.

" I have a father!" she repeated in a

tone of firmness softened by delight; "and "that precious tear is my assurance."

The hour which succeeded to those eventful, those precious moments already elapsed, was occupied in the indulgence of those poignant feelings description fails to reach, and the strongest powers of imagination but faintly conceives. Imogen, the long-deserted, alienated, friendless Imogen, whose heart had hitherto so long cherished those sweet and glowing affections, those tender and refined sensibilities, it was so eminently organized to feel, yet cherished them in vain; and who, rich in all those sensations that constitute the summit of human felicity, had hitherto lived isolated from their enjoyment, and, amidst the social blisses of creation, still wandered

"A solitary fly,
"Without a horde of sweets,"

now for the first time met a father's tender gaze, and heard herself claimed by the endearing title of *child:* while the ardent

feelings of the count (in whose bosom the warm affections still reared their unfaded heads, as though the chill breath of age had not sighed upon their freshness) revelled in the transporting conviction of having found a long-lamented and only child, the fair and blooming transcript of the idol of his youthful adoration, of the saint of his maturer homage; a saint to whom his heart had erected a shrine where affliction still offered hourly tributes of tenderness and regret.

To the tide of emotion which at first overwhelmed the souls of the father and child succeeded that ardent and mutual curiosity so natural to their situation. Imogen, though flurried beyond the power of perspicuous detail, briefly ran over the particulars of her life since consciousness first awakened in her mind amidst the dreary cloisters of St. Dominick. Her relation was indeed little more than an history of her sensations or ideas; for till within the last six months her life had been monotonous

and unvaried, equally barren of incident and destitute of event. That part of it where her heart was most interested was the most eloquently touched on; and when she spoke of her connection with the canoness, the virtues, the talents, the generosity of her friend, the spirit of friendship seemed to breathe inspiration on her detail, and gratitude shed her glowing tints on each trait of excellence memory delighted to reveal. The character of the lady Magdelaine and the friar were sportively sketched off with all those powers of comic delineation which betrayed the disposition of their possessor as not wholly inimical to

"Every scene of ridicule in things,"

when the playfulness of the happiest temperament was not clouded by the shadowy influence of care, distracted by the throes of suspense and anxiety: and her account of her situation at the chateau, and the

authorship of her learned patroness, drew a smile to the lips of the count, whose pensive brow gradually resigned its compression to the influence of her cheering vivacity; while the eager attention with which he hung on her detail seemed touched with new interest as she dwelt on the character and friendship of the minor canoness of St. Dominick.

When she had concluded her interesting relation, over which she had shed those illuminations of mind the light of genius only emanates, and which the count, under the grateful consciousness of paternal pride, had delightedly noticed, he tenderly embraced her, and uttered a prayer of thankfulness to heaven, that in recovering a child he had found her indued with that strength and cultivation of mind which is ever the best testimony of the virtues of the heart.

While on the bewitching graces which accompanied these invaluable possessions he was silent, but not unobserving, after a

pause of some length the count said: "I "must now, my beloved child, leave you "for a short time. You have been brought "a prisoner to this camp, and as such I "stand accountable for you to our com- "mander in chief. The young duke de "Guise has lately joined his uncle, the "duke de Mayenne: they are both my "friends, and I have the honour to be "collaterally connected with the duke by "his mother's side, whose virtues and ta- "lents are the admiration of the world. "I well know how deeply my illustrious "friends will participate in my rapture, "when I acquaint them that in my pri- "soner I have found my long-lost daugh- "ter: but lest the instinct of nature "should but faintly corroborate the inco- "herent claim I have made to thee as "such, take this key. On the table near "the couch where you reposed last night, "you will behold a small casket: it con- "tains some papers relative to my life and "thy birth. When amidst the gloom of

" midnight I have left my restless pillow,
" and soothed my sorrows by retracing
" them (sure beyond the sad indulgence
" of my own melancholy feelings) some
" sweet and secret intuition urged me to
" the mourful task, and my heart's faint
" hopes suggested that the tear of filial
" tenderness should bathe those woes pa-
" ternal anguish had recorded."

CHAP. XIII.

Here's much to do with *hate*, but more with *love*.

SHAKSPEARE.

Ma del siu de la madre em pia fortuna
Pargoletto develse.

Sonetto de TORQUATTO TASSO.

AS soon as the count had retired, Imogen, all eagerness, all hope, all emotion, flew to the casquet. The first object that presented itself to her eye was the miniature of a beautiful female, whose strong resemblance to herself left no doubt that it was the picture of her mother; and the kiss her warm lip stamped on it was bathed with tears of tenderness and regret. On the back of the gold which encased it was written, " Julia de Ribemont, countess " de St. Dorval." " Then I am indeed " the daughter of the count and countess

" de St Dorval !" was the silent ejaculation of the tender but not unambitious heart of Imogen. She then took out a roll of manuscript, and eagerly began the perusal of the following

MEMOIRS.

AMONG the ancient nobility of Provence the barons *de Montargis* and the counts *de St. Dorval* held no subordinate rank. Equally high in the scale of dignity, power, and opulence, their equality produced those germs of competitorship which many unavoidable and many adventitious circumstances contributed to mature. Whether embroiled in domestic feuds or foreign contentions; whether, in the slumber of warfare, or the intervals of peace, they entered the ring, or jousted at the tournament; or whether amidst the social enjoyments of the public banquet or the privacy of retired life; still the powers of dissension, of hereditary hatred, opposed them to

each other on the list of inveterate and irreconcileable enmity.

The Durance, whose blue waves bathed the rocky base of the chateau Montargis, reflected from the opposite shore the lofty turrets of St. Dorval. Ages had rolled over the time-proof edifices of antiquity; and still they frown on each other in all the gloomy pride of rivalship, and still do they give to the eye of the beholder no faint emblem of that domestic animosity which has so long existed, and still subsists, between their respective families. The family de Montargis embraced the heresies of Luther in the reign of Henry the Second.* The counts de St. Dorval, at the same period, were active in their endeavours to check the innovation the schismatic spirit of the age was gradually introducing

* Henry the Second executed the edicts against the Hugonots with the utmost severity. He erected a chamber of prosecution, composed of members of the parliament; and at the coronation of his queen

into the immutable system of their ancestors' holy faith. In a later day the barons de Montargis united with Catherine de Medicis, and afterwards with Henry of Navarre in suppressing the League and crushing the house of Lorraine: the counts de St. Dorval in promoting the measures of the League and supporting the duke of Guise.* Thus religious distinction and political faction seemed united in their endeavours to sharpen the asperity of family feuds; but it remained for that passion, which should be the great solvent of every rancorous sentiment, to hurl the arrow of defiance at every hope of reconcilement; and love completed that structure of discord, of which hereditary religious and political hatred had laid the foundation. Twenty

---

Catharine de Medicis was present at an *auta de fe* of obstinate Hugonots, which contributed, among the other nuptial festivities, to the amusement of the court.

* Head of the princes of Lorraine.

years have elapsed since the present baron de Montargis and count de St. Dorval were in the prime of life. They were the only sons of two tender but ambitious fathers, who had not yet paid the debt of nature, and who instilled into the minds of their children those principles of dissension which had from infancy rankled in their own. The younger de Montargis was of a cold, phlegmatic, and gloomy character: the ambition of a great alliance had forced him into an early marriage, and he became a father and a widower in the very spring of life. On the death of his first lady, love suggested a second union; and Julia de Ribemont, a rich protestant heiress, and the ward of his father, became his betrothed bride by the dying wishes of her parent. The lady de Ribemont was conducted to the chateau de Montargis previous to the celebration of their nuptials, and the two de Montargis's were only prevented from accompanying her by the political distraction which at that period agitated Paris.

Mean time the younger St. Dorval, adverse to the political intrigues in which his father was engaged at the metropolis, of a delicate constitution, and of a romantic and studious turn, wooed peace and the muses amidst the embowering shades of Provence; where every grove was sacred to the presiding deities of love and song, and breathed the spirit of the tutelar being to which they were consecrated. It was at this period a circumstance took place which produced the following letters.

Letter the first.

M. de St. Dorval to the Lady Julia de Ribemont.

Suffer me, madam, to reject those elegant acknowledgments, as dangerous as they are unmerited. The spirit of benevolence irradiates your countenance, yet you talk of a common-place act of humanity in a light a being of inferior species only should consider it. If your looks, your air, your eyes, are truly illustrative of

your mind, your sentiments should rise in the scale of refinement, even beyond the conception of ordinary characters. Review, madam, the little incident once more which gave birth to your polite note of this morning; and, as the first indiscriminating flush of gratitude subsides, it will doubtless appear to you in a different point of view. Alone and solitary, I was rambling along the delicious shores of the Durance, when, from the beautiful harbour which fronts the portico of the *chateau de Montargis*, I beheld your little bark put off: my eye pursued its picturesque course; while its snowy sails unfurled to the breeze, its streamers glittering through the foliage of the intervening groves, it glided proudly o'er the wave, as if conscious of the precious treasure it enshrined. The river's devious course had scarcely stolen it from my gaze, when suddenly the sultry air glowed with unsupportable ardour; dark red clouds hovered in the atmosphere, emitting from

their massy points, coruscations of flame, or bearing on their gloomy surface the lightning's vivid flash. The distant thunder rolled its profound echoes amidst the deep cavities of the surrounding rocks, and the presiding spirit of the storms seemed to brood its furies on the late glossy bosom of the Durance: its waves swelled, became agitated, rose to the elevation of mountains, or sunk to the dark chasm of an abyss. Guided only by two youthful rowers, I beheld your boat vainly struggling with the rapidly-increasing horrors of the storm; and, amidst the wind's shrill squall, the faint cries of female distress met my ear. Accompanied by a few of my domestics, well skilled in the navigation of the river, I ventured into a light pleasure-boat, and had the good fortune to save yours, and conduct you in safety to shore. Eager only for your preservation, I did not consider whether it was to the chateau de Montargis, or the chateau de St. Dorval I carried you. Chance directed it should be the latter; and to be

candid, I trembled lest your silence and reserve should have been the effect of your having already inhaled that pernicious vapour the air of Montargis respires, and which seems to poison every mind it taints against the family of St. Dorval: but haply the evident depression of your spirits proceeded from the fatigue and apprehension you had sustained; and, to confess the truth, I am selfish enough to wish it did; for your condescension in suffering me to attend you and your companion home looked not like the effects of family prejudice: yet in you, who are so soon to become a lovely member of that family, such a prejudice might not be wholly unwarrantable. We are apt not only to excuse but adopt the errors of those we love; for love is a sophist, who preaches not to the reason, but the heart; and all its weaknesses and all its passions are but too favourable to the subtlety of his arguments. How little the heart can answer for itself this letter betrays: I meant to have written

a few lines, and have given you a volume: I will, however, only add, that at the moment your too grateful and too flattering billet of this morning was put into my hands, I was on the point of making my personal enquiries for your health at the *chateau de Montargis*. I would not swear, madam, that you come not under the penal laws of Charlemagne on the score of sorcery; and that the sudden storm, with all its relative circumstances, was but the illusion of enchantment: for certainly nothing less than a *magic spell* could lure a son of the count de St. Dorval to the portals of the baron de Montargis. I struggle not against supernatural agency, I bow to the omnipotence of my beautiful enchantress, and only await her command to pay those respects in person, with which I am the most humble and devoted of her servants,

ST. DORVAL.

Billet.

From M. de St. Dorval to the Lady Julia de Ribemont.

You are right, madam, the soul is of no sect, no party: it is, as you say, our passions and our prejudices, which give rise to our religious and political distinctions. You add, you have already dropt a tear to the dissensions, which have so long divided the families of Montargis and de St. Dorval: it is thus that angels deplore the self-created miseries of man; although exempt by the divinity of their nature from a sympathy of suffering. May thy sensible heart ne'er fell a woe, but what its compassion for the sufferings of others awakens! Circumstances prevent your receiving me this morning, but to-morrow——Why cannot time be annihilated till to morrow?—Till to morrow (what magical letters compose that little word!) and ever, I feel I am destined to be the most devoted of your servants,

ST. DORVAL.

Billet.

And have I spent some hours in the chateau deMontargis ? and are they to be the happiest of my existence ? Certainly they are, if you persist in your cruel resolve !

Not suffer me to see you again ! Gracious heaven ! why then suffer me to visit you at all ? Why permit me to listen to those accents which penetrate the soul; those sentiments which vibrate in unison with all its most refined emotions; those lips so bashfully wise; those eyes so eloquent in silence ? Am I then destined never again to listen to the voice of the charmer, 'charm she ever so wisely' or acknowledge the fugitive and syren graces with which nature has adorned her more inestimable gifts? perhaps, at this moment, the infant *Montargis* (happy urchin!)sports in your arms, and pleads with cherub smiles the cause of his absent father. Yet, though 'tis true the boy is *Love's loveliest* emblem ! yet, oh fair Julia ! construe one smile as the cold intercession in the favour

of friendship: yes! let the infant boy of Montargis plead for St. Dorval; and St. Dorval will forget he is the son of the man it is his inheritance to hate; he will consider him only as the child of Julia's future adoption; as the child of Julia's future husband.— What a politician, even in love, is this Montargis, when in his absence he consigns his fascinating cherub to your care? With the perfections of this lovely infant ever before your eyes, will they not, by a natural association, lead your thoughts towards the father? happy, too happy de Montargis!

ST. DORVAL.

Billet.

A thousand blessings light on the seraph head of your young companion! You say he was playing in your arms when my supplicating note reached you, and that his smiles and caresses seemed intuitively to second my entreaties. I am all gratitude for your condescending acquiescence, even though obtained by the involuntary in-

fluence of the child of Montargis. Adieu! I shall wish away the hours till this evening.

ST. DORVAL.

Letter.

A few days are scarcely elapsed since a note from Julia would have communicated in its touch a thrill of rapture through my whole frame; yet with the intuitive apprehensions of love, I shuddered when I received your letter of this morning. Although the gravity and reserve with which I have been lately received might have taught me to expect it, I hesitated to break the seal; and the blood which glowed in my veins as I kissed the lines so lately traced by you, froze with icy coldness round my heart as I perused them. You say you weep as you indite, and confess I taught those tears to flow: you deplore your fatal indulgence to my wishes, yet blame me as the efficient cause of your

imprudence. Oh Julia! you are the arbitress of your own destiny, and your misery or happiness depends solely on yourself. Awaken then from that slumber of the mind into which the timidity of your nature has lulled you. Remember that you are imprudent only according to the circumstances which may govern your future life; that that father which promised your hand held no power over your heart; that to bestow that hand when the affections are withheld will not be prudent but criminal; that though by a parent's will the forfeiture of your rich possessions follows the breach of that contract your heart never subscribed to, you are still left mistress of your person and your actions. Oh Julia, I have now but one other argument to suggest, and then I shall be silent for ever!

The son, the only son, of the count de St. Dorval, heir to an hereditary hatred to the house of Montargis, and stimulated by many personal aggravations to nourish that

aversion, imbibed almost with maternal nurture, has sacrificed his justly-founded hatred, personal dislike, political and religious sentiments, his resentment, his prudence, and his pride, at the feet of Julia de Ribemont: all, all have vanished to the glance of her eye, to the sound of her voice, and St. Dorval, the once proud and haughty St. Dorval, has meanly and clandestinely stolen through the forbidden portals of Montargis, which for ages have been barred against his family, which still but for their master's absence would have been closed against himself, only to catch one smile from the lip of Julia, one glance of soft encouragement from her eye! Such, oh Love, is thy omnipotence! But why delineate to Julia the feelings of a heart whose every vibration she is already mistress of? It is true I have hitherto been silent, and Julia has been—Oh heavens! her infatuated modesty, her timid reserve, her refined and elevated delicacy, even when caution closed the eye, and when prudence

slumbered, breathed the vestal soul of sublime and immaculate purity itself; and when even the remembrance of her beauty's transient flower, her lively wit's bewitching blandishment, her youthful form's fresh fascinating graces, shall fade in the lapse of time, those sweet attributes of feminine perfection shall live in my heart's fond recollection till that heart shall cease to be Julia's, shall cease to throb with life! Yes, Julia, in spite of your silence and reserve, you know you are beloved; and oh! if my heart has not deceitfully construed in my favour those sweet compliances I have read in thy full blue eyes, those sudden blushes that warmed thy cheek at my appearance, that touching pensive air which softly ushered in my loitering departure, Julia's heart beats with no languid pulse for St. Dorval. The emotions which pursue this (perhaps chimerical but blissful) conviction baffle description; they overpower, they overwhelm me. I will not, dare not, add another line, save that in which I en-

treat you will suffer me to see you an hour before sunset this evening on the west rampart of Montargis. Oh Julia, Julia! you will not, must not refuse this last request of him who only holds his existence from your hands.

ST. DORVAL.

Letter.

M. de St. Dorval to the Chevalier de Sorville, at Paris.

Villa de Fiora, Tuscany.

Your letter has followed me here: I dare not dwell on its contents: its arguments are unanswerable, for they are the vigorous offspring of that *mens conscia recti* which, amidst the trials of your chequered life, and the vicissitudes of your sensible heart, has never deserted you. It is in you alone we trace the sanguine virtues of youth united to the wisdom of age and the cautious prudence of experience. It is for you only, great and amiable philanthropist! to subdue the agonized throbbing of your own lacerated heart, to alleviate the

sorrows or rectify the errors of your friend. But it is now too late. Julia de Ribemont is mine by every tie human and divine. She has flown from a world unworthy of her: she has lost perhaps the languid approbation of the prejudiced, the pity of the ignorant, and forfeited those possessions for which alone the unfeeling de Montargis sought her alliance: but she has bestowed on your friend an inexhaustible mine of felicity, and participates in all the happiness she confers. Let then my inexorable father renew his unnatural and cruel vow, which casts me for ever an alien from his love: let my enemies triumph in the defeat of my prudence and the downfal of my pride: Julia de Ribemont is mine! that sweet conviction fills my whole heart, nor leaves one avenue open to regret.

That I have stolen a portionless wife from the family of Montargis, you tell me, is not the main object of my father's implacable resentment; but that in wedding a Hugonot, this unfortunate union may

give birth to a race of heretics, whose apostacy shall cast an indelible stain on the uncontaminated faith of the house of St. Dorval, and forfeit the religious as well as the political principles of their ancestors, incessantly harrows his mind, and aggravates resentment beyond the power of reconciliation. Oh, de Sorville, how little does he know of the liberal, the noble-minded Julia! She already has no will but her husband's; and if her faith is founded on error, it is at least free from that pharisaical zeal and stubborn bigotry which the conscious infallibility of ours inspires. The ardour of your friendship certainly misleads you, when you wish me to appear in the presence of my father ere the first flush of his anger has yet subsided. Time is the best soother of those irritations which flow rather from the passions than the reason. In the interim, add to all I already owe you by remaining with my father, and supplying to him that place his undutiful but still affectionate son has for-

feited. You are his nearest relation; your influence over him was once only second to mine, and now reigns unrivalled. You, who have lost a *Rosalie de Villette*, can have no tie to attach you to the world but the benefit it may derive from your example and exertions. Oh! in every thing my superior but in years, I place my destiny in your hands: steal me again into my father's heart, and rescue the brilliant felicity I enjoy from those hovering shades with which the consciousness of filial ingratitude may at a future period obscure it.

I cannot dismiss this letter without giving you some slight sketch of our present situation. The villa de Fiora is the only inheritance I possess independent of my father. Even the diversified and beautiful landscapes of Provence can give you but a faint idea of the glowing charms of Tuscan scenery; nor does Italy present to the gaze of tasteful admiration a spot more luxuriant in beauty, than the villa de Fiora. In this sweet retreat, imparadised in bliss, se-

cluded from the world, its cares, its prejudices; lost to every reflection of the past, to every anxiety for the future; for three months, three fleet and rapturous months, the finger of smiling felicity daily wove such hours of bliss in the web of our existence as fancy's bright idea gives to the heavenly, to the pure and subtle joys of Elysium. Oh! how describe that crisis of bliss, where the full heart is insensible to a want; that union of soul which sympathy, friendship, esteem, and passion, inviolably confirm; that soft delirium of the senses which communicates the charm of love to every object around us, and represents them to the eye under a new and more delightful aspect than reality confers? I will not attempt to delineate what you have felt and I still enjoy. May they again be yours; and may some other Rosalie de Villette, fair, lovely, and excellent as her you have lost, awaken you to a repetition of those exquisite feelings which are now, in the most extensive and

refined sense, the possession of your friend. Adieu!

ST. DORVAL.

I had almost forgot to mention a singular circumstance. *Stephano*, my father's Spanish servant, and who has ever stood so high in his favour, has had a dispute with his lord, which has caused their separation; and he has followed me to Italy, to seek an asylum in my little establishment. He supplicated me with tears in his eyes to receive him; and, as I remember him from my infancy, I could not refuse his request, which was seconded by the seducing intercession of my sweet Julia; yet I know the fellow to possess all the gloom and bigotry which generally characterises his countrymen.

From the period in which this letter was written something more than a year fled away in the enjoyment of every social delight. A lovely infant became a new ligament in the indissoluble tie which bound

the two fondest of all human hearts; and in the sweet and sacred character of a mother, madame de St. Dorval shone with new lustre in the eyes of the father, the husband, and the lover. Mean time neither the soothing suggestions of natural affection, nor the never-ceasing intercession of the chevalier de Sorville, could soften the asperity with which the prejudices of the count St. Dorval regarded the conduct of his son, whom he had formally deprived by will of all the law permitted to be withheld.

The *old baron de Montargis* was in the interim killed in an affray at Paris; and his son, in full possession of the forfeited estates of the heiress de Ribemont, publicly laughed at the romance of his successful and disinterested rival, and secretly nourished a hope of revenge, which he soon found an opportunity to display, thought not wholly to accomplish. High in favour with Charles the Ninth, although a rigid Hugonot, he found means of in-

sinuating a report to the royal ear, prejudicial to the loyalty of the *house de St. Dorval.* His son's absence left the old count to stand the brunt of an accusation, which not even the suspicious tyranny of Charles could validate. This circumstance occasioned a rencontre between the count and the baron de Montargis, in which the former was slightly wounded. The report reached the ears of the younger de St. Dorval, and for the first time since his marriage contrition smote his heart. It was in vain he would have concealed from himself that his conduct had irritated de Montargis to the base revenge he had sought; a revenge that exposed his father to the ignominy of a public accusation; that while this venerable father exposed his life in defence of his honour with youthful ardour, his son, amidst the soft and syren scenes of Italy, lapt in love's Elysium, and wholly resigned to rapturous indolence, passed his youthful days amidst the inglorious joys of peace and love.

Even the blandishments of his beautiful wife, the infant caresses of his lovely daughter, failed to awaken one thrill of rapture in a heart where remorse sat brooding over the keen plaints of conscience. It was at this period a letter arrived from the chevalier de Sorville, his best and only friend, which finally determined him on a step he had long meditated.

"Your father," said the chevalier," after having recovered his wound, and arrived from Paris at the chateau de St. Dorval in tolerable health and spirits, was seized with a paralytic stroke. This is the second he has had since your marriage; a third is to be feared, and will leave no hopes of his recovery. Need I add more to induce you instantly to set off for France? Madame St. Dorval will join her seducing entreaties to mine, and assist in restoring you to your father. I have only to add, that the baron de Montargis has obtained the gove[illegible]ent of a northern province, and has left his young son to be edu-

cated at the chateau de Montargis, to court the return of that popularity his father had justly forfeited."

"Go," said madame St. Dorval, throwing herself into her husband's arms, when she had read this letter: "go, and com-
"plete the happiness you have begun: go,
"restore yourself to your father's heart,
"and heal the only wound that rankles in
"that of Julia."

The next morning St. Dorval set out for France; he parted from his wife and child, and parted with happiness for ever! On his arrival at Provence he found the inhabitants of the chateau St. Dorval overwhelmed with consternation and sorrow.

"It is in vain to conceal it from you," said the chevalier de Sorville, embracing him; "your father has just breathed his
"last." St. Dorval sunk lifeless into those arms which strained him to the noblest heart that ever throbbed in a human breast.

It was not till some days after the inter-

ment of the count's remains, and until the first flow of that filial affection which remorse sharpened to insupportable agony in the breast of his son had subsided, that the will of the late count was opened, in the midst of a numerous assembly. The count St. Dorval and his friend the chevalier de Sorville alone testified no surprise on finding that the late lord of St. Dorval had left nothing to his son but that patrimony of which he could not deprive him; and that the estate brought into the family by his alliance with his lady (one of the richest heiresses in France), together with vast personal possessions, were bequeathed to the chevalier de Sorville.

The chevalier, approaching the notary, who read the will aloud, took it into his own hands, and, having looked it slightly over, tore it into a thousand pieces. "Thus "perish," said he firmly, "the unjust in- "strument of parental displeasure, framed "under the immediate operation of pre- "judice and passion! Had the count

" lived to recover his perfect senses, which " the nature of his disorder deprived him " of so long before his death, thus would " it have perished by his hands." Then throwing himself into the arms of St. Dorval, he added in a tone of affectionate elation, " Long may the count of St. Dorval " live to enjoy the ancient possessions of " his illustrious ancestors!"

St. Dorval had a heart to feel as profoundly the generosity of his friend, as that inestimable friend had a soul capable of every act that raises humanity even above itself. In return for all he had voluntarily relinquished, the chevalier was with difficulty prevailed on to accept St. Dorval's Tuscan estate, although extremely limited in an income which was rather the patrimony of the distressed than his own.

After some time spent in necessary arrangement, the count and his friend set off for Italy, to conduct the countess and her daughter back to France. The count had not acquainted his wife with his de-

parture from France; and his heart fondly sketched the idea of his unexpected return to Julia with all the delicate ardour of a lover, with all the more homefelt satisfaction of a husband. An absence of nearly two months had revived those fading flowers of passion which drooped beneath the ardour of unclouded possession; and, distant from the object of his idolatry, fancy shed those divine attractions round her surpassing even the sweet reality of her own perfections. The soft feelings of a father ameliorated the ardent enthusiasm of the lover, and a thousand hearts swelled in the bosom of St. Dorval when he arrived within view of the groves of de Fiora. Leaving his friend in the carriage, he mounted a swift horse, and proceeded (or rather fled) alone to the villa; jealous even that the eye of friendship should witness the sacred effusions of his enamoured heart, that beat with feverish violence. As he fastened his horse to a tree at the end of the avenue which led to the house, and

while his eager eye flung round on every side its quick enquiring glance, in fond expectation of lighting on the precious objects it sought, his trembling limbs scarce bore him to the portico: but Julia and her child reposed not beneath its marble shade, as they were wont in the meridian hour. When St. Dorval reached it, it was filled with domestics, who fled with horror and amazement at their master's sight: at the same moment four strangers passed on, bearing a coffin on their shoulders; and Stephano, the Spaniard who followed it, caught the lifeless form of St. Dorval in his arms. The fears of St. Dorval were not the phantoms of an anxious tender heart—Julia was no more!

The return of reason brought with it all the agony of unutterable woe. St. Dorval burst from the arms of de Sorville (who shed those tears the dry and inflamed eye of his friend could not weep), and, with a frenzy that mocked the power of restraint, fled instinctively to Julia's apart-

ment. The bed was hung with black, and covered with a pall: beside it lay the cradle of her infant; the veil which was flung over it was that which Julia wore when St. Dorval last strained her to his heart. St. Dorval snatched it away, but it covered not the form of his child. He called alternately on the names of Julia and her daughter: no lisping murmur, no melting voice of tenderness, answered to the frantic enquiries of the husband and the father. The image of despair in its gloomiest aspect, St. Dorval clasped his hands, and seated himself on Julia's bed.

It was in that dreadful moment, when every feeling of his heart was wound up to the last strain of suffering; when conviction of the loss he had sustained touched the nerve of soul-felt sorrow even to the very quick; when his wildly throbbing temples shot pangs of anguish through his burning brain, and his glaring eye and flushing cheek felt not the refreshing dew of one heart-easing tear; it was in that

dreadful moment, when the blackest horrors of despair succeeded to the liveliest, sweetest hopes of love and rapture, that the chevalier de Sorville sought to soften the silent stubborn sorrows of his friend by relating the melancholy cause which had awakened them. He read aloud the following letters, which were on the point of being dispatched to St. Dorval when he arrived at the villa de Fiora.

Fragment of a Journal from Madame to M. de St. Dorval.

Were I to tell thee at what hour in the twenty-four I miss thee most, it would be in the decline of evening, that sweet solemn season so dear to the pensive pleasures of the heart, so consonant to the tone of our minds and feelings, when day and night seem to struggle for that empire twilight has usurped; when the western star sheds his pale light on the deep blue of the cloudless atmosphere, and the sun's last fading blush still glows on the purple mists of evening. 'Tis then, solitary and

alone, I wander to those luxuriant shades where in the decline of a beautiful day we used to repose. Fancy animated by tenderness and regret touches every object with the idea of my absent love: in every sighing breeze I hear the voice of St. Dorval, and a soft recollection of my husband steals on me from the view of every object. I weep, but my tears are not ungracious; and I return home, and court that repose which lures to my pillow the soft dream that gives me back St. Dorval and mocks the power of absence. It will gladden thy fond heart to hear that some new intelligence daily beams on the seraph countenance of our little Imogen; and I almost expect to hear her cherub mouth pronounce the name of mother. Oh, what a joy were that to the mother's doating heart! She almost springs from her nurse's arms to mine, and with that eager look of joy her father's speaking eye so often emanates. 'Mayst thou,' said I this morning, 'resemble thy father in virtue as in person!'

The precious infant clung to my bosom, and seemed to smile assurance to my prayer.

To-day, as I spread my trinkets before her, she seized on the agate cross that was once thy sainted mother's (which you prize more from that circumstance than its intrinsic value), and held it so fast that Ursuline, who is a right pious catholic, insisted on tying it round her neck; and so it has become the little monopolizer's property. Stephano, who was arranging a flower-vase at the time, looked on with marked expression in his eye at the transaction: doubtless he thought it boded well of the future piety of our infant, in spite of her mother's heresy. You know his bigotry; yet he is a faithful soul, and officiously attentive in your absence. I have sat in the portico all day, watching the expected arrival of your courier, and have now returned to my own room to chide you for your inattention. Three long, long weeks, and no letter for Julia! That

you may have received my packet! My heart can well judge of the anxiety of yours by that with which it is agitated at this moment. My spirits are wretchedly depressed; and, without any immediate cause, my tears fall faster than I can write. I will invoke the talismanic power of my sweet infant's smiles: at this moment I hear her sporting in Ursuline's arms beneath the casement. Adieu, my love! A sweet evening succeeds to an oppressive and sultry day: I am going to join our little girl, and dissipate by a ramble the gloomy visions that crowd on my heart. Adieu!

In continuation, by one of Madame St. Dorval's women.

Monseigneur,

When the countess arose from her escrutoire I gave her her veil, and she joined the nurse and child in the lawn. Near two hours had elapsed, when the countess returned alone. We were all surprised at her having kept the lady Imogen out in the

evening air to so late an hour. The countess complained of extreme fatigue, and retired to her room: when she had undressed she went, as she was wont to do before she retired to rest, to visit the nursery; but neither the infant nor Ursuline were there! This was the more astonishing, as the countess had sent the child home early in the evening, and had rambled alone in the orangery. When inquiries were made, it was found that neither Ursuline nor the infant had returned. Although it was night, and a heavy rain began to fall, the countess, followed by some of the domestics (while others set out in different directions), flew to the spot where she had parted with her child. It was near the skirts of the wood which runs to the rear of the villa; and at no great distance farther up in the wood, fastened by ropes to a tree, and exhausted with crying, they found Ursuline. She had been seized on by two men after she had parted from my lady: one held a pistol to her breast, while

the other carried away the infant. The man who held her then bound her arms to a tree, and she had remained for more than an hour and a half in that situation. The countess retained her senses till she heard the melancholy detail, and then fell lifeless in the arms of her attendants. She was carried home; her garments were drenched with rain, as was her fine hair, for she ran out in her night dress, and without any covering on her head. It was generally believed that some robbers who lurked in the woods had carried off the infant for the sake of the jewels which it was my lady's pleasure to deck her in. For two days every search was made: Stephano, who took it much to heart, scoured the country night and day; and the count de Morino made every exertion, but to no purpose.

Mean time a delirious fever seized on my lady, partly occasioned by the anguish of her mind, and partly by the dreadful cold she had caught on the fatal

night when the child was stolen. She raved incessantly of her infant: it was impossible to prevail on her to go to bed: she wandered franticly about the house, and sometimes rambled out in the night air to the spot where she had parted with her child, while the fever raged in her veins. After five days thus spent her strength was exhausted, and she suffered us to convey her to her apartment; but in passing near the nursery, she shrieked and flew to the cradle of her child: from this object it was impossible to part her; it was therefore carried into her room and placed by her bedside. Then she took off her veil, threw it over the cradle, and, seating herself by it, sung that sweet melancholy lullaby with which she was wont to lull the lady Imogen to repose. Sometimes she would gently raise the veil, and with a melancholy smile softly exclaim, "She "sleeps!" then rock the cradle and sing again. In this manner she passed the night: towards morning knelt down, and,

laying her head on the cradle, appeared to fall into a deep sleep—from whence she awoke no more!

Here oblivion drops the veil, and shades the expression of those woes which fancy dares not delineate, which memory dares not dwell upon.

The count of St. Dorval's sudden loss of father, wife, and child, with all their aggravating circumstances, was too much for the tenderness of his heart, or the strength of his mind: the former sunk beneath reiterated anguish; the latter gave way to the torrent of affliction that overwhelmed it. Amidst the general wreck, reason was dispossessed of her empire; and for two years her light beamed no ray on the darkened soul of St. Dorval.

In the first moment of his recovered senses he recommenced that hopeless search for his child which the chevalier de Sorville had continued with unabated ardour: hope still mocked him in the pursuit, and

to the agony of suspense the horrors of irrevocable certainty at last succeeded. Many a year since has rolled in gloom over the devoted head of St. Dorval, and brought in its course no beam of hope to illumine his dark fate. The retribution of heaven has fallen heavy on his heart; and till the last sad remnant of life he will continue to expiate that one act of filial disobedience from whence all his after sorrows flowed.

CHAP. XIV.

——Discretion hath so far fought with nature,
That he with wisest sorrow thinks on her,
Together with remembrance of himself.

SHAKSPEARE.

WITH the profoundest interest, the most eager curiosity, and breathless haste, Imogen perused the manuscript: and even when she had finished it, her eye still recurred to the letter written in her mother's hand, dictated by her mother's heart; while the fondness of fancy was willing to believe that the tear which fell to the memory of that sainted mother bathed those lines long since imbued with the precious dew of maternal delight. "Yes," said Imogen, "dear and tender mother! you were hastening to bless me with a last embrace "when your hand traced the last affectionate sentiment: my infant accents

" then reached your delighted ears, and the " smiles you hastened to invoke already " breathed fresh spirit on thy sinking " heart. And it was for me you died!" exclaimed Imogen, sobbing over the letter and pressing it to her lips. At that moment the count entered. Imogen arose, and threw herself into his arms: the count strained her to his heart: silent was the indulgence of their emotions; tears, sighs, and mutual caresses, were the language of their hearts.

When they were seated, and their emotion had in some degree subsided, the count addressed his daughter. " These papers, " my sweet child," said he, pointing to the manuscript, " which I have collated " and connected together as well as the " unsettled state of my mind would ad- " mit, contain the history of the most in- " teresting and eventful period of my life: " what has since followed is little more " than a blank. Six years after the death " of your mother, I embraced a military " life. It was a letter from the late illus-

" trious duke de Guise that roused me
" from the lethargy of despair. At a pe-
" riod when every gentleman in France
" embraced the party consonant to his
" principles, I recollected that I was the
" last of the noble house of St. Dorval;
" and, determined that the fading spirit of
" my family should emit one spark ere it be-
" came totally extinct, and expire in a flame
" not unworthy of its ancient fire, I headed
" a numerous body of my vassals, and
" joined the duke de Guise at ——. The
" prince, and his brother the cardinal de
" Guise, were inhumanly and traiterously
" murdered by Henry the Third. The
" misfortunes of that illustrious family at-
" tached me more firmly to its interest;
" and I had the happiness to be instrumen-
" tal in the escape of the young duke
" de Guise, imprisoned by the king on the
" murder of his father and uncle.*

* He was confined in the castle of *Tours*; and in 1591 contrived to effect his escape by the assistance

" Amidst the harassing cares of a mili-
" tary life, I have sought to bury the re-
" collection of my domestic misfortunes,
" and to forget the corroding sorrows of a
" broken heart. The lapse of seventeen
" years has ameliorated the asperity of
" affliction; and the recovery of my child,
" under the merciful providence of heaven,
" will, I trust, breathe fresh vigour on the
" long-fading springs of life, and give me
" yet a little longer to a world which now
" begins to wear the aspect of long-ba-
" nished joy to my eye. Yet though my
" heart confirms thee mine by all the
" sweet intuitions of nature, by the spirit
" of thy mother which breathes in thy
" accents, by that wondrous resemblance

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of his valet-de-chambre, who amused his guard while he got into a small boat, anchored beneath his casement. At the other side of the river he was received by some of his most intimate friends, who waited there with horses.—See *Cayet*, vol. ii. book 3.

" of form which restores her to my view
" as when first I beheld her lovely and
" blooming amidst the embowering shades
" of Montargis; and though that mark on
" thy cheek, that cross on thy bosom, are
" proofs irrefragable that thou art indeed
" my child, my sainted Julia's child; yet
" still my heart languishes with curiosity
" to penetrate the veil of mystery that has
" so long concealed thee from my view.
" That you were forced from your nurse's
" arms by robbers, lured to the barbarous
" act by the value of thy ornaments, I
" entertain no doubt; but that they should
" have preserved thy life, and carried thee
" from Tuscany to the convent of St. Do-
" minick in Champaigne, is a mystery
" past solving. Oh, my sweet Imogen!
" when scarce a week past I visited the
" convent of St. Dominick with my friend
" de Sorville, could I then have known
" that its walls probably enclosed my long-
" sought child!"

" Gracious heaven! my father! You

"visit St. Dominick, and but a week "back!" exclaimed Imogen, recalling the emotion with which the count had first heard her mention the convent.

"Didst thou not hear of the arrival of "two strangers, who spent some time at "the convent, on the day the sister Pasi-"phaë died?"

"I did," said Imogen; "they came "with a dispensation from the pope to "enable the canoness to seek for health in "a climate more genial to her shattered "constitution: but oh! they came too "late!"

"Those strangers, Imogen, were de "Sorville and your father."

"Gracious God! my father!"

"The canoness," continued the count, "was a woman of strong understanding, "but the strength of her passion was pro-"portioned to that of her mind. Her love "for the chevalier became a part of her "existence: neither philosophy nor reli-"gion were equal to its subjugation; she

"cherished it in madness and in reason,
"in the world and amidst a convent's
"chilling gloom: it survived the wreck of
"hope, and baffled the oblivious spell of
"time. Not so de Sorville: he loved not
"less tenderly than his mistress, but the
"influence of reason was even stronger
"than that of love over *his* mind: he did
"not blindly resign himself to the infa-
"tuation of a first passion, and pursue its
"indulgence beyond the line of possibi-
"lity; his thwarted affection gradually
"moderated into a tender interest and in-
"violable friendship for its once-adored
"object. He wrote to her, and his let-
"ters were fraught with the soothing at-
"tentions of humanity, the suggestions
"of reason, religion, and philosophy.
"Rosalie's answers breathed only the soul
"of passion, animated, not restrained, by
"opposition. He ceased to write, and
"strove by silence to subdue the energy
"of stubborn love in the bosom of the
"canoness. Her pride took the alarm,

"but her health became the victim of her "feelings. Mean time the chevalier con- "tinued single, and lived the friend of "mankind, the benefactor of society; of "no party in politics, of no sect in reli- "gion, he is at once patriotic, loyal, and "devout. His principles are not indeed "truly consonant to the present state of "society; and his Utopian system, his "love of civil and religious liberty, is ra- "ther a beautiful than a practicable theory: "yet even his errors are amiable, for they "are the errors of a man too good for the "world he lives in. Although his home "was the villa de Fiora in Tuscany, the "activity of his mind seldom suffered "him to remain for any time its inha- "bitant; and the tender and lively interest "he still felt for the sister Pasiphaë led "him twice in the year to the chateau de "Rosemont, from whence his sister pro- "cured him intelligence of the long-de- "clining canoness. It was in his last "visit he learnt from the physician of the

"convent that the canoness had no hope "of life but from change of air. At his "desire I applied to the duke de Mayenne; "and through his interest at the court of "Rome procured a dispensation from his "holiness, enabling the nun to visit Mar-"seilles, her native place.

"I obtained leave to quit the camp, "and accompanied him to the convent of "St. Dominick; and we arrived there a "few hours after her death. My duty "obliged me to return to the camp. The "chevalier loitered a day or two in the "neighbourhood, and then returned to de "Rosemont, where he still remains."

"Then it is certain," said Imogen, "I "have beheld this great and amiable "friend; and had my last visit to the con-"vent been an hour earlier, might have be-"held him who now suffers me to call him "father." She then related her adventure in the aisle of St. Dominick, on the night of the canoness's interment; and the count readily agreed with her, that the

mysterious visitor was no other than the chevalier de Sorville.

" I knew," said he, " he meant to pay " the last sad duty to his departed friend; " and it is perfectly consonant to the de- " licacy of his character, that he should " wish to indulge the luxury of sorrow " unperceived, and escape the prying eye " of vulgar observation: this melancholy " and reserve is the true indication of that " silent, sullen grief, which profound re- " fined feeling only nourishes."

The count then changed the conversation, to a topic more immediately consonant to their respective interests. " If," said he, " in a moment such as this, when " heaven has granted to my wishes all they " panted after on earth, one repining " thought could disturb my present feli- " city; that thought of regret should be, " that I am necessitated to suffer you, my " beloved child, to remain one moment " in a place and situation so every way im- " proper for you: and though the de-

" light of beholding and conversing with
" thee, supersedes in thy father's heart
" every other sentiment, yet I hope, on
" this and every future occasion, he will
" always have the fortitude to sacrifice his
" own gratification to thy happiness. It is
" indeed true, a father's arms are a child's
" best asylum: yet the uncertain and ha-
" zardous situation in which I am now
" placed, renders that asylum of a doubt-
" ful continuance; and a residence in a
" camp is as little consonant to female
" delicacy, as it is unsafe and incommo-
" dious. Deprived of all female attend-
" ance, except such as it were infinitely
" better to want; without even a female
" dress, a want so frequently betrayed
" by those rising blushes, which so elo-
" quently pourtray the wounded feelings
" of violated modesty; nothing can be
" less consonant to propriety than thy fur-
" ther residence here, even though that
" residence were a certain one, and thy
" father's protection permanent as it is

" now doubtful and unstable : for in the " breast of a man of honour, no private " claims, or selfish feelings, can oppose " themselves to the duty he owes society ; " and even though I still retained my " sweet Imogen amidst the tumults of a " camp, the affections of the father must " still be subservient to the soldier's duties. " I have only to add, that in acquainting " the duke de Guise with the circum- " stances of my child's recovery, he has, " with his usual goodness, anticipated my " wishes, and offered me the protection of " his mother, who now resides, with " her accomplished daughter,* at Guise ; " until his cause, no longer calling for " thy father's weak support, shall enable " him again to claim the precious deposit, " and retire with his treasure to the shades " of St. Dorval."

" Alas !" said Imogen tenderly; " hast " thou not said, a father's arms are a child's

* Louisa de Loraine, afterwards princess de Conti.

" best asylum? Yet, if I must so soon re-
" sign this late-found, dear asylum, why
" not seek the protection of the chevalier
" de Sorville's sister, madame de Rose-
" mont, to whom the friendship of the
" minor canoness had already consigned
" me?"

" Because," said the count gravely, " a
" situation which might have been eligible
" for the fugitive novice of St. Dominick,
" would be highly improper for the daugh-
" ter of the count St. Dorval. Madame
" de Rosemont, it is true, is amiable: yet
" in becoming an apostate to the religion of
" her ancestors, she did not, like her bro-
" ther, embrace the mild principles of uni-
" versal toleration; she is a rigid Hugonot.
" Her husband, of the same persuasion,
" died at the battle of Ivri by the side of the
" king of Navarre, whose strenuous parti-
" zan he was. Since that period the chateau
" de Rosemont has been an asylum to the
" enemies of the house de Guise and the ca-
" tholic faith: to such an asylum shall the

" count de St. Dorval commit his daughter;
" he who is the avowed friend of the former,
" who would die in defence of the latter?
" Besides, the proudest ambition of my
" soul, the tenderest anxiety of my heart,
" could not select for thee a protectress
" more worthy of becoming such, than
" the duchess de Guise.* Not more
" eminent for the qualities of heart and
" understanding, than celebrated for her
" refined and attic taste, her polished and
" interesting manners, this superior and
" extraordinary woman unites all that is
" great and noble in our sex, with all that
" is excellent and amiable in her own.
" With courage to oppose adversity even in
" its most dreadful form, with grandeur
" of soul to sustain undazzled the splen-
" dour of the most brilliant prosperity, her
" character is formed of the happiest ele-
" ments; and her great, her superior qua-

* For an account of the celebrated duchess de Guise, see *Memoires de Sully*; and Bayle's Dictionary, article *Guise*.

" lities, are so blended with all the soft " and pleasing attractions, that while she " excites our reverence even to awe, she " wins our love and secures our esteem. " It is to this illustrious princess, the boast " of her country, the idol of her friends, " and even the admiration of her enemies, " that I would consign my Imogen, my " child; until that happy period when I " shall be enabled to claim her to part no " more."

The heart of Imogen, ever emulous of superiority, equally ambitious of virtue and of genius, swelled in her bosom, as her father pronounced the eulogium of the duchess de Guise.

" Yes," said she with a sigh, " I will leave " you my father; let me not murmur at " the first command a parent's wish imposes. " Yes, send me to this incomparable wo- " man: with such a model in my view, " perhaps I may catch some of that excel- " lence by which I shall become more " worthy of being thy child."

The count tenderly pressed the hand clasped in his. "Continue but thyself," said he; "lose not the modest blush that "mantles on thy cheek; let not that "source dry up which sends the tear of "feeling to thine eye, the smile of rapture "to thy lip, the sacred source of sensi- "bility. Seek not to imitate, but to im- "prove, even to perfection, the excellen- "ces of thy nature; and thy father's "heart desires no more."

The count then mentioned, that a courier, which the duke de Guise was dispatching under escort to his mother, took to the duchess a letter of recommendation from her son in favour of Imogen; and that nothing remained but to procure leave from the commander in chief to accompany her himself to Guise. "I am now oblig- "ed," said he, "to attend a council of "war, which is to be held in his tent; I "shall then seize the most favourable oc- "casion of preferring my request,"——

"And heaven send it may be granted!"

said Imogen eagerly: "for to confess the "truth, my lord, my late adventures have "rather increased my timidity than added "to my courage; it is in your presence "only I feel that guardian safety so long "denied me."

"May your father long have it in his "power to afford it thee!" said the count, rising: then telling her that she might expect him back in less than an hour, he adjourned to the tent of the duke de Mayenne.

This hour was spent by Imogen in a variety of reflections, of which her father was the principal subject. Endowed by nature with that all-pervading, all penetrating apprehension, which mocks even the partial bias of affection, and pierces the veil in which the solicitude of tenderness shrouds the failings of its object; neither the strong sympathy which apparently existed between her father's character and her own, the prepossessing urbanity of his manners, nor that fond partiality which

the connection subsisting between them was alone sufficient to inspire, could conceal from Imogen that many an error of education, many a prejudice of party and of religious growth, were associated with the best principles of his mind, and shed their poison on the best feelings of his heart. She could not but recollect, that in his little biographical sketch of himself, the sect he professed was always mentioned as the only true and infallible religion; that with equal tenacity he adhered to the supposed justice of the cause he had embraced, rather from hereditary principle than the conviction of reason; that he had mentioned the sublime, the philanthropic sentiments of the chevalier de Sorville, as a beautiful rather than a practicable theory; and that the friendship of his sister was rejected because she was a *Hugonot*, and afforded a charitable asylum to the unfortunate of the same persuasion! Yet, even with all these errors of the mind, Imogen worshipped the still warm and tender sen-

sibility of her father's heart; the still surviving enthusiasm of his character; the apparent gentleness of his disposition; and that mild benevolence which, superior to prejudice, shone in his open countenance, as if eager to volunteer in the service of humanity, independent of every political and religious distinction: but what her heart most lamented, was the tie which bound him to a party whose instable foundation was fast falling to decay.

Of the hereditary and lineal claims of Henry IV. to the throne of France, her historical knowledge had furnished her with sufficient and undeniable proofs; and the amiable, the magnanimous character of the monarch, had long awakened a personal interest in his favour, in a heart which swelled at the splendid feats of the hero, and melted in all the sympathy of kindred virtue over the milder perfections of the man. She was not, however, sufficiently acquainted with her father's character, to dare to combat its prejudices.

While she yet dwelt on them with tenderness and regret, the count entered the tent: he was followed by a subaltern, to whom he was busied in giving some professional instructions. Meanwhile the domestics spread a table with more elegant and luxurious fare than a flying camp might be supposed to afford. The story of the count's discovery of his daughter in his prisoner, had obtained a pretty general circulation through the camp: and excited a general interest, which the count's domestics particularly displayed by the curiosity, tempered only by respect, with which they regarded their young mistress; who, though wrapt up in the minstrel's graceful robe, so as scarcely to betray what modesty herself might proudly reveal, blushed at the unseemly habit which disguised the feminine form of its lovely wearer. The count's delicacy awaked to the influence of his daughter's; he dismissed the attendants, and they sat down to table with only a page in waiting. An air of dejection, and

reserve seemed diffused over the manners of the count, which equally intimidated Imogen from enquiring into their cause, or demanding the success of his request. Her father spoke little, and ate less; and, when the dinner service was removed, he arose from the table and threw himself on a couch. Thither Imogen followed; and seating herself beside him, with that air of timid softness that feared to be intrusive, yet languished to alleviate the melancholy it witnessed, she exerted with gradual increase all those soothing arts, whose witchcraft steals sorrow from itself, and winds round the heart with imperceptible power: but as she faintly endeavoured to rally back the retreating spirits of her father by the affected vivacity of her own, in the smile of sadness that repaid her obvious and tender endeavours, Imogen traced their inefficacy.

"And must I part from thee?" said the count, after a long pause, gazing on her through tears of fondness.

"But for a short time I hope, dearest "sir," said Imogen with a smile and a sigh.

"God grant!" said the count fervently.

"Oh! he will, he will!" said Imogen with animation; "he whose goodness has "thus providentially restored thee to thy "child, will still preserve her to thee: "and trust me *my* heart's forebodings are "light and pleasant; they whisper hope "and happiness to my soul, and revel in "the fond anticipation of a speedy and "indissoluble re-union."

The kiss which she impressed on her father's hand, seemed to seal the assurance; although the tear that bathed it spoke her hopes not unalloyed by tender apprehension. The count, drawing her towards him, and gazing delightedly, yet pensively, on her interesting and eloquent countenance, exclaimed; "Child of my "heart's fondest care! lovely beam whom "the pitying mercy of heaven has sent

" to illume the gloom of my fading life ! " every moment, in unfolding to my view " the sweet revival of thy sainted mother's " perfections blooming amidst thine own, " draws thee nearer to my heart, and ren- " ders that heart still more loth to part " with all it loves on earth : yet such is " the unfortunate pressure of circum- " stances, that though this day only has " given thee to my arms, to-morrow tears " thee from them !"

" To-morrow !" faintly ejaculated Imogen.

" Thou knowest," continued the count, " that the king at the head of his army " has sat down before the gates of Laon, " one of the principal towns in the pos- " session of the League. It is much feared " the city must surrender : nothing indeed " can prevent it, but the success of a " scheme adopted by the duke de Mayenne " and the Spanish general, the count de " Mansfield."

" And what is that scheme ?" eargerly demanded Imogen.

" To send a considerable convoy of am-
" munition and provisions, under a strong
" escort, to the besieged."

" And is that practicable, my lord?"

" It will at least be hazardous," said the count, shaking his head; " and who
" can hope to frustrate the vigilance of
" the all-observing Henry?"

" But how does it immediately affect us,
" my dear father?"

" Imogen, at the moment I was about
" to prefer my request to conduct you to
" Guise, I found the convoy was appointed
" to set off by to-morrow's dawn, and
" that I had the honour to be appointed
" the second in command."

Imogen turned pale.

" To leave thee behind me is impossi-
" ble; and the only plan left me to pur-
" sue, is such as my heart, and probably
" thy courage, will shrink from encounter-
" ing."

" Give peace to thine own heart, and
" fear not my courage, my lord;" said Imogen *firmly*.

"Well then, my sweet heroine," said the count with a melancholy smile, "I "was thinking, that as the route of the "convoy lies for a considerable way along "the high road to Guise, to send you in "a litter, under its escort, so far on your "way, and to consign you to the care of "my most trusty servants and esquire for "the rest of your journey."

"My dear sir," said Imogen with a sigh, "to deliberate would be vain, "where there is no alternative. The hazard "of such an enterprize will be, doubtless, "infinitely less than our mutual fears will "be apt to imagine; and to encounter a "probable risk, is at least preferable to "awaiting a certain danger: for my own "part, I have no fears but what a separa-"tion from you awakens."

"Sweet child!" said the count, rather apostrophizing than addressing her, "and "innocent as sweet! thou knowest not "that woman, lovely, helpless woman, in "junctures such as these, is surrounded

" by dangers whose cause lives within her-
" self."

" Do you then think our scheme a ha-
" zardous one?" demanded Imogen.

" The king," replied the count, " will
" not act with his accustomed vigour and
" prevoyance, if he suffers us to gain the
" town unmolested: and should an en-
" gagement take place,——"

" You, my father, will be exposed to
" imminent dangers! and what then be-
" comes of the unfortunate Imogen?"

" My beloved child!" said the count, drying her tears, then steeping the handkerchief in his own, " forgive me, if " with less heroism than thou possessest, " I have suffered my tender apprehensions " for thee to get the better of my judg-
" ment: it is, doubtless, my solicitude for " thy safety which has sketched out ideal " terrors, and tormented my heart with " self-created evils, which may never be " realized."

" In that belief," said Imogen with a

faint smile, "let our hopes for the present "repose."

The count then talked with more composure of their intendd expedition. Imogen's litter was to be placed near the centre of the convoy, where the count's command would chiefly lie. Her packet from the canoness to madame de Rosemont and the chevalier de Sorville, with her father's papers, were to be instantly dispatched to the latter: and Imogen, when she arrived at the duchess de Guise's, was to write to the abbess of St. Dominick and the lady Magdelaine de Montmorell, informing them of the discovery of her parents; to thank them for their attention; and to send a magnificent present to the former, as a gratuity for the support afforded her from her earliest years by the convent.

For this, and every other purpose her rank in life, and situation at the hotel de Guise, might require, the count was to send an unlimited order to his banker at Paris, to supply her with whatever sums

of money she might demand. Then observing that a cloud still hung over the spirits of his daughter, he proposed, to amuse her, that they should adjourn to the outer division of the tent, to take a view of the camp without being seen.

Imogen, ever alive to the pleasure a novel spectacle affords to a young mind, delightedly assented. The count fondly drew her arm through his own, and passed on to what might be called the antichamber of the tent; then partly concealing themselves behind the drapery of the scarlet curtain* which shaded its entrance, a scene equally animated and interesting presented itself to their view.

The sun was setting in cloudless splendour. Over the plain, where the camp extended to a considerable distance, the arms of the soldiery glittered to its beams: the

* Nothing could be more splendid than the camp of the Leaguers; the luxury and ease in which the duke de Mayenne revelled in the midst of his army, did *not escape the sportive* raillery of the witty king.

unfurled banners, gently agitated by the evening breeze, glowed with its departing blushes: the gaudy streamers, which distinguished the tents of the officer from the subaltern, caught the warm reflection: and the flood of crimson light which flowed from the west, imbued every object with its rich and mellow tints. The splendid armour of the warrior chief, his snowy plumage and flowing mantle, as he leaned on his glittering falchion, or with haughty stride traced the accustomed rounds, gave to his manly form that chivalrous air of dauntless valour, which the magic illusion of romance sheds on the hero of its own creation. The soldiers under arms were going through their accustomed evolutions, while the troops not on immediate duty were scattered in various groupes through the intersected avenues formed by their tents. Some, leaning on their lances, seemed to betray the heat of the argument they discussed, by the vivacity of their gestures; some were staking their newly gained spoil

at quoits; and others, lolling before their tents, hummed their provincial songs, or sent back their pensive thought to the beloved and peaceful home of their youth: while the air of gay-hearted hilarity which was distinguishable in the countenance and gestures of the French troops, formed a lively contrast to the solemn deportment and Moorish gravity that marked the appearance of the Spanish soldiery. The trumpet's shrill blast, the drum's deep-toned beat, and the confused murmur of many thousand voices ascending on the air, with the martial music of the various military bands; all these intermingling sounds so appropriate to the scene, gave it the last finish: and to the vivid and romantic fancy of the young spectatress, it appeared rather as a splendid effort of fairy conjuration, than a spectacle of real existence.

The count watched, with delighted satisfaction, those traits of natural and lively emotion which gradually betrayed themselves on the animated countenance of his

daughter. "All," said he mentally, "sweet "child of nature, is pleasing to thee, be- "cause all is new: O youth, what a sea- "son of delight is thine!"

The curiosity and pleasure of Imogen seemed incapable of satiety; and she gazed on the busy scene before her, till the sun sent no dying beam to the horizon, and the shadows of night floated in grey vapours on the plain, involving every object in its undistinguishing hue: already the watch-fires glimmered with dusky flame through the curling mists; and through the waving drapery of the tents, the illuminations within flung their broken light; while the gaudy crowd, which lately strewed the plain, retired to snatch such temporary rest as the uncertain destiny of war permits; all but the night-watch, whose heavy pacing step vibrated along the allotted round, mingling their fainter echoes with their armourer's clanking sounds, the chargers hollow neighings, and the drum's last order of retreat. Then all was still,

and silence hung upon the death of every sound.

From this scene of interest the solicitude of the count for the health of his daughter obliged her to retire: they returned to the interior of the tent, which was lit up: and while they refreshed themselves with fruit and some light wine, the count informed his daughter, that he should write that night to the chevalier de Sorville, in order to bring him to the camp, that he might inform him himself of the happiness he enjoyed in the recovery of his child, whose loss the chevalier almost equally lamented with her father; and that he should also write a letter to the duchess de Guise, giving an abstract of Imogen's life, and the circumstances of her recovery.

"And now, my child," said the count, with an air serious and impressive, "lend "me, for a few minutes, thy undivided at- "tention. He, who alone sees into the un- "born events of futurity, and who holds in

" his almighty grasp the destinies which
" govern the universe, can alone know the
" result of the hazardous enterprize we are
" now venturing on. But whatever may be
" thy earthly father's fate, thy father which
" is in heaven will, I trust, encompass thee
" with the shadow of his wing, and guard
" thy life and innocence for the enjoy-
" ment of happier years than have yet
" been thine. Nay, hear me out, sweet
" Imogen! I would willingly believe that
" safety hovers round thee with guardian
" care; that thou wilt reach in perfect secu-
" rity the hospitable asylum of thy illustrious
" protectress; and that thy father, having
" fulfilled his duty as a soldier, shall soon
" be able to gratify the feelings of the
" man; to retire from the harrassing cares
" of warfare, and close the evening of a
" stormy life in the bosom of domestic
" felicity. Such are the suggestions of
" hope and probability; but while there
" is a *possibility* of the reverse, let us at
" least endeavour to provide against those

" conjunctures, it may not be practicable
" for human power to prevent. I may
" fail in the attempt I have undertaken;
" for to deserve success confers no irrefra-
" gable claim on its possession: and you,
" who have already been a prisoner to *one*
" army, may become, under the influence
" of war's uncertain fortune, the captive
" of *another*. Should I fall, the chevalier
" de Sorville will claim you as the daugh-
" ter of his friend: should I survive the
" enterprize, you will need no other cham-
" pion: but this remember, should a fatal
" chance throw you for a time into the
" hands of the *royalists*, be not too prompt
" to reveal your rank and name; for high
" in the royal army stands the betrothed
" husband of your mother, the deadly
" enemy of your father, the baron de
" Montargis. Thy second loss, like the
" first, would afford a triumph to his ma-
" lice, and might retard thy liberation;
" or, by promoting it, render thy father
" the debtor of him to whom he would

" scorn to owe a less consequent obliga-
" tion. Not only the baron, but his son,
" now advanced in the bloom of man-
" hood, basks in the sunshine of courtly
" favour: the tie of interest alone unites
" Henry to the father, but it is supposed
" the *stronger* bond of sympathy draws
" his royal favour towards the son: for
" the king affects to admire romantic he-
" roism in the field, and romantic senti-
" ment in the closet; and the younger de
" Montargis either affects or possesses
" both. He has already been involved in
" a dangerous adventure, which led him
" into the heart of our camp, from which
" he narrowly escaped; and the king, in-
" stead of reprimanding his boyish impru-
" dence, has recompensed with knight-
" hood and military command what *he*
" deems his *dauntless valour*. From the
" power of the cold iron-hearted de Mon-
" targis, and his self-sufficient and inflated
" boy, may heaven guard and preserve my
" child!"

Imogen's spirits were sunk even to tears by the apprehensions her father's conversation awakened, and she wept in silence on his shoulder.

"Nay, beloved," said he, tenderly pressing her to his heart, "I feel that it is but "a timid excess of affection, that tinges "my foreboding thoughts with the sad "gloom of apprehension."

"And, I trust, but the timid excess of "mine," said Imogen, smiling through her tears, "that renders my heart so much "alive to the infection of your tender "fears. Yet you shall find, my lord, I "will not disgrace my doublet and hose; "and that to-morrow I shall catch a spark "of thy fire, whose vital warmth shall "diffuse hope and courage through every "artery of my heart."

"Till that eventful to-morrow," said the count, embracing her, "repose in "peace; for the fatigues thou must un-"dergo call for that strength of frame and

"spirits, the soft restorer of nature's wea-
"ried powers can best bestow."

Imogen then, at her father's request, retired to the apartment where she had slept the preceding night; and where a female night dress, coarse but cleanly, had been provided for her, by the woman who had attended her in the morning.

Imogen sought not to woo repose to her pillow when she pressed it: the variety and nature of those reflections which agitated her mind forbade its influence: the extraordinary events of the past day still recurred to her apprehension; the uncertain fate which hung upon the future wearied her imagination. Safety or danger alternately soothed or disturbed her hopes; and now she beheld herself the distinguished guest of the illustrious duchess de Guise, and now the orphan captive of the implacable and haughty de Montargis. Then the terrors of her scared fancy sought oblivion in a fond recurrence to her father's history. The romantic enthusiasm of St.

Dorval, the splendid virtues of de Sorville, the mild excellence, the winning perfections of Julia, alternately floated in her memory, nor did the scenery of St. Dorval and de Montargis claim less interest than the events and characters by which it was animated.

Provence and its classic river, which the eager eye of Imogen had so often sought upon the chart of France, and which ever appeared to that enamoured eye as traced in those living characters which chemic art designs, with the fire of electricity, communicating a soft vibration to every fibre of her heart, had been the scene of her parent's youthful loves, the residence of her ancestors, and probably would be the future home of her life. The mention of the Durance in her father's manuscript, had awakened the associating principle of thought: and her heart with logical accuracy severed each closeley-linked idea; till that which occasioned a fond recollection of the minstrel filled her whole

mind, and, mingling with the stealing visions of repose, shed o'er her slumbers the dream of love and fancied bliss.

CHAP. XV.

A touch more rare subdues all pangs, all fears.
SHAKSPEARE.

As waves white-bubbling over the deep come swelling, roaring on, as rocks meet roaring waves, so foes attacked and fought; man met with man, and steel with steel; shields sound and warriors fall: as an hundred hammers on the red son of the furnace, so rose, so rung their swords.

OSSIAN.—*Fingal*, b. 4.

THE busy murmur of the camp chased the spirit of repose from the pillow of Imogen. She arose, and was already equipped for her journey when her father entered the apartment: the pale cheek, the heavy eye, betrayed the nocturnal vigils of the count. With the morning salutation he gave his daughter a tender embrace, and informed her the convoy was then drawn out, and

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the litter, which was to convey her, in readiness.

To Imogen the laconism of his manner betrayed a heart but ill at ease; for extreme anxiety is seldom loquacious. Having forced her to take some refreshment, he led her to the entrance of the tent, close to which stood a small litter drawn by four horses, and surrounded by four of the count's domestics in military habits. The count again in great emotion embraced his child, gave her a tender but faint benediction, placed her in the litter, and, mounting a fierce charger, himself led the way to the convoy, which was on the point of marching. The litter was placed in the centre of the ammunition-waggons: the count, at the head of his troop, rode at the distance of a few paces from it. The heart of Imogen throbbed with violence; her eye, which would have sought the comfort of her father's presence, shrunk from the inquisitive gaze of every curious spectator. The trumpet's

shrill blast echoed along the extended line; the word of command flew from rank to rank: in an instant the whole body was in motion.

It proceeded for some leagues in that careless security the sanguine hope of success inspired: already the beaming spires of Laon flash on their eyes; already the banners of the league appear to float on its ramparts. These objects, whether real or imaginary, stimulate their exertion, and change expectation into certainty: while, triumphing in their nearly realized and hazardous project, they reach the wood which lies half-way between the forests of La Fere and Laon, the most critical point on their route; and the count beholds at a trivial distance the road where his daughter's equipage separates from the convoy, and proceeds, without the apprehension of danger, to the town of Guise: when lo! the sudden signal of alarm blown by the war-horn vibrates from the advanced guard along the line, and rouses the inflated war-

riors to a variety of motion and energetic effort; the hauberk suddenly raised, the spear as swiftly pointed, the lance boldly couched, the clash of arms resounding on every side! From the chief in command the deep-toned war-voice thunders its orders; his subalterns give it endless echo: every feature of alarm, eagerness, and exertion, burst around, like so many refractions of light from the dusky surface of a flint. The vivacity of the youthful warriors rushing impetuously to the charge, is scarcely repressed by the veteran's scanning look of cool experience: young velocity scarcely rivals ancient vigour in exertions of nervous energy: while amidst this scene of wild and furious tumult, one soul seems to impel and animate the whole,—eager anxiety to engage, with due subordination to supreme command.

The escort of the convoy now halt to receive and oppose the furious charge made on it by a considerable detachment of the royal army, headed by the gallant duke de

Biron. The attack is made and sustained with equal fury. Already the cavalry are forced to retreat to the sides of the waggons; and the onset made by the royalists on the infantry is so overwhelming, that, unable to resist the torrent, they seek temporary shelter amidst the carts which convey the ammunition. Mean time the Spanish battalion, desperate from the dilemma to which the horse and foot are reduced, rush madly forward with an attack so vigorous, that the royalists, discomfited, begin to retreat in confusion and dismay. It is then that the noble duke de Biron, with all the spirit of heroic ardour, commands a hundred gentlemen of illustrious birth, who had accompanied him, to alight, arm themselves with pistols, and fight hand to hand! From that moment the combat rages with a fury that mocks the order of discipline. Chief grapples with chief; and the subaltern, twining his arms round those of his opponent, shares with him the same glorious grave. The French fire at last

subdues the Spanish firmness: the escort gives way on every side, and flies in every direction: the victors pursue them with desolating fury, and suffer but a few to return to their camp, the sad historians of their dire defeat; then, having sated their vengeance on the enemy, take charge of the prisoners, and, laden with spoil, provisions, and ammunition, return in triumph to the royal army.

Among the sad and various pictures of human suffering which this scene of carnage and desolation presented, the most affective was that which the situation of the count St. Dorval and his daughter afforded. On the first alarm the count rode up to the litter, and, in a tone of voice he meant should be inspiriting, attempted to soothe those apprehensions in the timid bosom of his daughter, which on her account he could not extinguish in his own. Then called on to lead his troops, with a look of agony, he returned the heart-breaking glance of Imogen; who now, lost to every

sense but that which general terror and apprehension for her father inspired, gazed on the scene of horror and tumult before her, under the influence of a dreadful suspense less supportable than the most fatal certainty. Mean time the combat became every moment more fierce, more desperate.

The count fought, almost beneath the eye of his shuddering daughter, with the dauntless valour of heroic youth, tempered by the cool sagacity of a veteran; and stimulated to exertion almost more than human by his own private interest, in addition to his ardour for the common cause in which he embarked. It was the various feelings of the father, the man, the soldier, that combined their influence, nerved his arm, and gave force and vigour to every exertion. The eye of the almost breathless Imogen still pursues the rapid lightning of his brandished sword: amidst the general uproar his form only presents itself, his voice only vibrates on her ear,

every emotion of her beating heart is condensed into the one overwhelming apprehension for his safety. She beholds him carried away by the disorder of the troops from that station affection had fixed near her litter; she sees him sustain a variety of attacks; she sees his helmet cleft in twain; she beholds a cavalier single him out with savage ferocity, at the moment that his troop with the rest fly in disorder; his horse, covered with wounds, sinks beneath him; his opponent joins in the pursuit: the count, on foot and wounded, totters towards the litter; then, faint with loss of blood, sinks beside it, while two soldiers advance freely towards the prostrate hero with looks of desperation and brandished spears.

At that moment the woman's heart of Imogen ceases to tremble. She springs from the litter; the affections of that warm heart, stimulated by filial duty, worked on by tenderness, compassion, and apprehension for its object, brace every nerve with a

strength that mocks the timid calculation of danger, and braves the form of peril in its most dreadful aspect! She flings herself beside her father; and, with her outstretched arms, forms around him a shield consecrated by nature. The soldiers brutally attempt to tear her from the bleeding bosom of her parent; they succeed in their savage endeavours: a shriek of agony bursts from her quivering lips; she struggles, she pants; her mind ceases to be conscious of its sufferings; the heroism of sensibility is fled; nature takes its course; she falls lifeless to the earth, already strewn with the bodies of the dead!

A young cavalier of splendid appearance, who had viewed the singular scene at some distance, as, disgusted with the unsatiated ferocity of his fellow conquerors, he halted in pursuit of the conquered, now rode up to the soldiers, and ordered them at their peril to take care of the young prisoner; whose form alone betrayed his

youth, for the face of the captive was smeared with that blood which had flowed from a wound in her arm she had received in her last struggle with those who tore her from her father's breast. The cavalier was then borne away by the torrent which poured on in pursuit of the vanquished.

Thrown in a cart among the wounded and the dying, Imogen, after a long suspension of every faculty, awakened to a sense of her situation: that sense was but transitory; the agony of her mind, together with that of her wound, plunged her again into all the oblivion of total insensibility, and one fainting fit succeeded another until they reached the royal camp.

It was in a large tent, and stretched on a straw mattress, that perfect consciousness of the late events and her present situation was restored to her. The groans of the wounded soldiers who lay round her vibrated in her ears. She raised her languid eyes, and beheld the suffering wretches attended by a grave formal-looking man;

who, regardless of the impatient supplications of agony, with a cold, deliberate, and unfeeling air, went through the discharge of his duty professionally methodical. Imogen was the last to share his attention. He raised her arms; and, after having slightly examined the wound, with a supercilious smile, turned to a hag of wizard-like appearance, who followed him, and exclaimed: "Dame, here is room for your skill; "apply some of your simples to this young "cavalier's scratch." Then, with an air of careless indifference, he left the tent. The old sybils roughly seized the bleeding arm of the invalid; and, fixing her ghastly eyes on the shuddering form of the prisoner, with a loud laugh exclaimed: "Marry, "forsooth, a pretty valiant cavalier truly, "to faint with the scratch of a pin! Why, "sir knight of the fairies, thou should'st "never have come within arm's length of "thy lady mother's bodkin. Mass! thou "wert a rare gentleman to leave thy "nurse's arms and come a soldiering. An' "the *duke de Guise* has no stouter sword-

" men than thee, our good king might win
" his whole army with a handful of sweet-
" meats."

During this curious (and, from her dialect, almost unintelligible) harangue, she was busied in applying simples and tying up the arm of her patient. She then, humming an old ballad, left the tent. The agony of bodily suffering soon lulled the companions of Imogen into a torpor that resembled sleep: Imogen's deeper wounds were of the heart, and bled in anguish over the doubtful fate of her unfortunate father. Still he appeared to her eye, as it had last beheld him, prostrate on the earth, the blood gushing from his breast, the grey locks of his uncovered head bathed in the vital stream, the torture of his mind distorting every feature, as, with a feeble arm, he endeavoured to withhold his child from the grasp of violation, then overpowered sunk lifeless on the earth. In all the frenzy of grief such a recollection was calculated to inspire, Imo-

gen started from her straw bed; and paced the narrow limits of her tent with a hurried step, whose echo caught the attention of the sentinel without. "Why, mon-"sieur," said he, looking in on her, "for "aught I see, there is no use in keeping "you in the hospital who are so light of "foot, and keeping others out in the open "air who are not able to crawl. Here, "monsieur," addressing the serjeant of the guard, "pray cast an eye upon this "party-coloured cavalier, who looks more "like a charlatan than a soldier. *Mort de* "*ma vie!* you succour a town blocked "up by our glorious king! I wot thou "should'st have stayed with thy boy-ge-"neral, the little duke, and helped him to "whip tops and play at quoits. *Sacre* "*Dieu!* you victual a town!"

"Why, this is the minstrel-like youth," said the serjeant, gazing on Imogen with a look of recognizance, "who got between "us and the rebel count St. Dorval. I "trow, we had made him pay for his inter-

" fering, but for our colonel, who gave " us some kind of charge about him; " and so we had the humanity to spare " his life, and fling him into a cart with " the killed and wounded."

Imogen, in whom the power of articulation seemed wholly suspended, now raised her timid eyes, and in a voice faint and indistinct said:

" Will you suffer me, monsieur, to ask " one question?"

" Let it be a brief one then," said the serjeant bluntly.

" Did the count de St. Dorval survive " your attack?"

The serjeant with a malicious smile turned upon his heel, and, calling out to a soldier under arms, bade him take charge of that prisoner, and conduct him to the next tent on the left, where the last prisoner had died of his wounds; then, roughly seizing her by the arm, pushed her forward.

Imogen, unresisting, faint, and trembling, followed the soldier; and, eagerly

shunning the gaze of unfeeling curiosity, her singular appearance attracted, raised not her eyes till she reached the place of her destination. It was a small tent, furnished with a mattress, table, chair, mirror, and a few other articles, such as spoke its late occupant to be a prisoner of no mean rank; and Imogen doubted not but she owed the comparative comfort of her present habitation to the interest she had awakened in the bosom of the superior officer alluded to by the serjeant, but of whose humane interference in her favour, she had not, amidst the horrors and tumults of the scene, retained the faintest recollection; and supposing the serjeant had followed her, she turned round to enquire into a circumstance that at once awakened hope and gratitude, when she perceived he was gone. She then advanced to the door of the tent, and attempted to address the sentinel who paced with measured step without it; but rudely interrupting her, he pointed his bayonet as if to prevent her

advancing, and told her he had received orders to hold no parley with a prisoner and a rebel.

Imogen, who now felt herself cut off from every species of communication; obliged to stifle every emotion of anxiety, suspense, and curiosity, turned back desponding; and measured the limits of her little prison with a quick and uneven step that betrayed the perturbation of her mind, and the variety of agonizing reflections that wearied it. The uncertainty of her own fate, the still stronger apprehensions she entertained for that of her father, gave rise to a train of painful cogitations, which the high colouring of imagination exaggerated beyond every power of patient endurance. To the agony of her mind was added no inconsiderable degree of bodily pain; and she had suffered so much from heat and thirst that, totally overcome, she was on the point of falling to the earth, when she observed a small jar of fresh water lying near her. She eagerly

seized and carried it to her parched lips, and felt as if she inhaled a new sense of existence with the refreshing draught. As she laid down the vessel her eye glanced on the mirror: she shuddered as she contemplated the figure it reflected to her gaze. Her long hair loose and dishevelled hung wildly over her neck and shoulders; the ashy hue of death paled her cheek, whose whiteness was rendered more conspicuous from the crimson drops that stained it; while her outer garment, torn and disfigured, but ill concealed the page's light garb she wore beneath it.

Struck with horror at her own ghastly and singular appearance, she bathed her face with what water was left, disentangled her tresses and bound them round her head, and disencumbered herself from the torn fragments of her upper garment. Revived by this little personal attention, she continued with renovated strength to pursue her locomotive reflections till the darkness of night hung over the camp; then

overcome with bodily fatigue and bodily pain, and wearied by those conflicts of mind, the struggles of her hopes and apprehensions, and her doubts and fears, awakened, she flung herself on the mattress, and exhausted nature bowed to the soft influence of obliviating rest.

CHAP. XVI.

Vi conosco amate stelle
A quei palpiti d'amore
Che svegliate nel mio sen,
Non m'inganno ; siete quelle
N'ho l'immagine nel core,
Ne sareste cosi belle
Se non foste del mio ben'.

METASTASIO.

THAT restoration which ever attends on the repose of innocence, shed its balm on the wounded mind, the debilitated frame, of Imogen, and united with the native excellence of her constitution to breathe renovation on every sense, and restore that elasticity of spirits which with the young and sanguine suffers but a temporary suspension. The morning's cheery light seemed to dispel the gloomy visions of her mind, with an effect similar to that produced by its return on the natural world;

and the sun, as it shone through the curtain entrance of the tent, kissed with its warm beam a cheek on whose polished surface the rose of health again faintly blushed its return. Her mind, restored in some degree to its strength of tone, busied itself in separating her ideas from the confusion which amazement, recent horror, and overwhelming emotion, were calculated to inspire; and hope reillumined its vestal flame in a bosom where nature seemed determined despair should ever *despair* of seizing; for it was a bosom organized for the reception of every sweet and joyous feeling, and glowing with that genial warmth which nourished every germ of happiness to maturity, and considers even the cloud of affliction as the transient precursor of future bliss.

Imogen had scarcely risen from her pillow, when the sentinel who patrolled before the tent looked in upon her. She observed her guard had been changed during the night, and from the counte-

nance of the soldier she believed the change would be in her favour; or probably she was disposed to see every thing in a more grateful light than the preceding evening.

"Ah, my young sir knight!" exclaimed the centinel as she approached him: "why "truly, if sleep were a banquet, thou hast "fared rarely; for I have watched thee "since the first cock crew, and by my "holy rood thou hast slept it out like a "prince. I warrant thee, thou art ready "for a slice of our black bread, and a "pipkin of Rhenish wine would not long "lie in thy way. Well, thou look'st a "puny little soul, and thou shalt share "my mess willingly; for else till the mid-"day watch is relieved thy appetite must "keep cool."

Imogen, with all that ardour of hope so easily awakened in the heart of the young and unhappy, fancied she read in the apparent courtesy of her guard a prelude to more material services. "I am most "grateful to thee, my good friend," said

she, "for thy kind offer, though I feel no "inclination at present to avail myself of "it; yet it emboldens me to consider thee "as one who in compassionating my situa- "tion may be inclined to relieve it."

"Thou art right," said the soldier bluntly; "as far as *pitying* thee and sharing "my mess with thee goes, I am thy man."

"And no more?" demanded Imogen despondingly.

"Thou darest not ask more," returned the sentinel: "for though thou art thy- "self a little traitor to thy king, thou "darest not tamper with the fidelity of a "soldier who has the honour to serve under "him, and the grace to love him next to "his heavenly commander."

Imogen, who, though she severely felt the disappointment of her vague and sanguine expectations in the stern fidelity of her guard, yet, with the liberality of a superior mind, reverenced that virtue by which she was a sufferer.

"I do not wish to corrupt thy honour,"

said she, " but to interest thy compassion. " I am not so ignorant as to believe my " escape from hence could be practicable ; " nor probably, could it be effected, would " it avail me," she added with a sigh. " Ignorant of the laws of war, I would " know the destiny that awaits me; I " would inquire whether there was a pos- " sibility of acquainting my friends that I " live and am a prisoner ?"

The soldier, looking on her with a countenance in which duty and compassion evidently struggled, returned: " I have " already trespassed on my orders by thus " long holding parley with thee. I can " only tell thee thou art in noble hands; " for thou art the prisoner of the *baron* " *de Montargis*."

Death seemed to have hung his chillest icicles on the heart of Imogen, as she faintly repeated, " The baron de Mon- " targis !"

The sentinel returned to his station.

Imogen no longer walked with hurried

step under the agitating influence of suspense. She had now every thing to fear, and nothing to hope. In an attitude of despondence she seated herself on the side of her mattress: her countenance, her whole figure, betrayed the silent torpor of despair!

From this state of sullen inanity she was awakened by a guard, under the command of the serjeant she had seen the night before, who ordered her to arise and accompany them.

"Whither?" faintly demanded Imogen.

"To the baron de Montargis," retorted the serjeant.

"Oh God!" exclaimed Imogen impulsively, and wringing her hands, while tears filled her eyes, "'tis impossible! I cannot, "will not, go a prisoner into the presence "of a Montargis!"

"No!" returned the serjeant; "then, "by my holy dame, we will assist thee. "Soldiers, do your duty."

"Lead on then!" said Imogen firmly, and disengaging herself from the grasp of her guards.

The fire which had warmed the souls of her illustrious ancestors, seemed suddenly to spread its flame through her sinking heart; the pure and noble blood that filled her veins flowed with quicker circulation; the tear dried in her indignant eye; her soul was resolved. The last descendant of the house of St. Dorval, though a woman, disdained to shrink from the presence of a baron de Montargis. The timidity of her nature gave way to its pride: "Lead "on!" said she firmly to the soldiers; and, surrounded by her guard, was conducted through a considerable part of the camp to the tent of the baron de Montargis.

The rich scarlet drapery which shaded its entrance, the banners that waved over its summit, spoke the military consequence of its owner. Though large, it was wholly occupied by a crowd that waited the orders of the baron, who had that day been ap-

pointed colonel of the king's life-guards; and Imogen and her guards were detained for a considerable time at the entrance, while behind their robust and brawny forms the timid prisoner sheltered herself from the gaze of the passing multitude. The crowd gradually dispersed; and, only attended by the serjeant, she was ordered to advance. The baron de Montargis was writing at a small table: a cloak of purple velvet, thrown back from the shoulders, discovered the brilliant polish of his shining breast-plate, and fell in rich and graceful folds to the ground; the dark plumage of his helmet shaded his face, and added to the height of a form majestically lofty, even though half-recumbent; while a young page tottered beneath the weight of his cuirasses and sword, of which he seemed just to have disengaged himself. As the profile of his figure was only visible, Imogen raised her eyes to its contemplation; then letting them fall to the earth, and folding her arms, stood in proud and silent expec-

tation of the result of this extraordinary interview. No tear dewed the feverish blush that burnt on her cheek; no sigh of apprehension died on her lip; the heroism of pride and sensibility was now wound up in the bosom of St. Dorval's daughter to its last strained pitch; a word, a breath, a thought, would have been sufficient to destroy it.

"May it please you, monseigneur," said the serjeant, stepping up to the baron with an air meanly servile, "the prisoner "you condescended to express some inte- "rest in, has, through my interference, "been treated with every mark of respect, "and now awaits your good leisure."

The serjeant drew back, the baron flung down his pen, turned round, and having for a moment regarded the half-averted form of Imogen, said to the serjeant: "I "thank you for your attention to my "wishes; it shall not go unrewarded: but "you may retire for the present; I would "speak to this youth alone." The ser- *jeant obeyed.*

"Speak," continued the baron, addressing Imogen, "young and daring stranger, "who, thus habited in the garb of peace, "hast braved the battle's fiercest rage, and "wooing danger in its most dreadful form, "didst rush between the suspended sword "of death, and the prostrate form of the "count St. Dorval."

The baron ceased to speak; but no dauntless reply, consonant to the heroism he alluded to, answered the interrogation.

Imogen raised her drooping head, yet with difficulty raised it; the fire of her eye was extinguished on the snowy surface of her cheek; no vagrant tint betrayed the vital warmth of life; her hand pressed on her bosom seemed to heave with the palpitation of her heart; her lips, the fair rivals of her bloodless cheek, quivered with a broken sigh; and while a glance, doubtful, tender, languid, and retiring, beamed from beneath the shadow of her half-raised eyelash, panting, faint, and trembling, she appeared like a beautiful personification of "*Echo in* love's soft sadness pining into

air." The baron arose; advanced humanely towards his now almost lifeless prisoner: his eye of fire rolled in silence over a form touched with no mortal interest; his heart's sanguine tide rushed over his manly cheek, deserted again to his heart, again crimsoned his face, and the power of articulation at last returned to lips, that faintly, tremblingly, ejaculated, "Heavenly powers! "the novice of St. Dominick."

"The minstrel of Provence!" inarticulately returned Imogen, and clung for support to the pillar against which she leaned.

"Then I am not deceived," said the baron, supporting her in his arms, and clasping her trembling hand in his; "this "form is no illusion conjured by my oft "deluding fancy, to cheat the wishes of "my heart into transient bliss; for, oh! "this hand, this precious hand, which "communicates in its touch a kindred "throb to the wild pulsations of mine; "that glance, which plays upon my heart's

"finest nerve, and restores it to that soft
"vibration Imogen's eyes first awakened;
"tells me, though thus disguised, though
"thus so unexpectedly found, that thou
"art indeed that Imogen, who, in days
"precious to the dearest recollection of
"memory, shed love's vital beam upon
"the kindling soul of the wandering visi-
"tant of Montmorell."

A thousand hearts swelled in the bosom of Imogen, whose trembling form still depended on the encircling arm of the baron for support. The resentment of slighted love, the tender effusions of awakened passion, the amazement natural to a discovery so far beyond the limits of probability, the fondness of the mistress, the sensitive delicacy of the woman, the humiliating feelings of the prisoner, and the inborn pride of the heiress of the count de St. Dorval, the hereditary enemy of a Montargis, alternately struggled in her breast. The baron's ardent gaze, the too close pressure of his embrace, gave to pride

and delicacy the sole empire over her tumultous sensations. With an air firm and dignified, she withdrew herself from his arms; the truant colour of her check again suffused its paleness even to the deepest tint of crimson; the kindling spirit of her mind reanimated her languid eyes: she retreated a few steps, then modestly but without perturbation replied:—"It is true, "sir, I am that person, who, when some "months back you sought asylum in the "chateau de Montmorell under the as-"sumed character of a minstrel, held a "temporary station in the household of its "lady. I am now your prisoner; and you "are, I am told, the baron de Montargis, "to whose humane interference I owe my "life."

The baron started: the air, the manner, the words of Imogen, froze the tide of passion that a moment before rolled tumultuously in his veins; he gazed on her in silent wonder; a new recollection seemed to break upon his mind; his colour

changed, he advanced, drew a seat towards Imogen, which her weakness rendered acceptable; then pacing the tent with hasty strides, after an uninterrupted pause of some minutes, he seated himself near her, and with a long-drawn sigh exclaimed: "Lady, in the sudden, the over-
"whelming emotions thy most unexpected
"and too welcome appearance excited,
"the past, the present, and the future,
"were equally absorbed. I beheld thee;
"again beheld thee; that rapturous con-
"viction filled my whole soul, and my
"heart was inaccessible to every other
"thought: but even my impetuous feel-
"ings bow to the supremacy of thy
"power; it was for thee only to rouse
"those powerful emotions, which but a
"moment back bewildered my senses in
"the trance of rapture; it is for thee only
"to subdue them. We have indeed both
"changed characters since we last met:
"I left thee, lady, the gentle novice of
"St. Dominick, the fair representative of

" cloistral purity untinctured with cloistral
" gloom: timidly gay, and bashfully
" wise, thy genius, like the purest ore
" immersed in debased crystalline, shone
" through the gloom of thy rigid destiny;
" while thy modest nature shrunk from
" betraying those intellectual perfections,
" which concealed their splendour beneath
" the retiring graces of woman's witching
" softness. I found thee (yes, lady, that
" air of cold reserve assists my truant re-
" collection)—I found thee amidst the
" tumult and carnage of a field of battle,
" foremost in the career of danger, op-
" posing that delicate form with Amazo-
" nian boldness to the fury of the fight,
" and, with arms formed in the symmetry
" of love's softest mould, shielding the
" prostrate count de St. Dorval from in-
" stant death, and saving his life even at
" the risk of thine own!"

" And did I save it?" eagerly demanded the weeping Imogen; whose feelings, work-ed up to the last excess of emotion, needed

but the sound of her father's name wholly to overpower them: "and has the count "de St. Dorval preserved his liberty with "his life?"

"He received both, lady, from me," replied the baron haughtily, but with uncontrolled emotion.

"Then for that one act," said Imogen, throwing herself at his feet, and bathing his hands with her tears, "may heaven "shower its choicest blessings on you! In "saving his life you have not saved his "only; in securing his liberty you have "restored me to mine."

The baron was overpowered: almost ready to sink beside Imogen, he with difficulty raised her; and snatching his hand from the soft grasp of hers, "Go!" said he, "too dangerous even in that sensibility "another excites. I lack not thy grati-"tude, nor his for whose sake only it "flows; nay, I deserve it not. Fate placed "a noble triumph in my hands, nor did I "suffer it to escape. My house's deadliest

" foe, the count St. Dorval, lay at my
" mercy ; and thinkest thou with this no
" common enemy I would have played a
" common part ? No ; I rescued him from
" the power of those with whom he vainly
" struggled for life, placed him on my
" own horse, gave him in care to his
" squire, who supported him in his arms;
" nor even deigned to tell him it was thus
" a Montargis triumphed over his enemies!
" It was thus I revenged myself on the
" man whom it was my inheritance to
" hate, who tore from my father's heart
" his blooming bride even at the altar's
" step, whom from my cradle I have been
" taught as a rebel to oppose, as a bigot to
" detest, as an enemy to despise !"

" No, my lord," interrupted Imogen indignantly, " you do not hate, you can-
" not despise, the count St. Dorval ; that
" sympathy which exists between the vir-
" tuous of every rank, of every persuasion,
" forbids it. It is the narrow suggestions
" of early imbibed prejudices that veil your

"better reason, and make you behold "errors in the character of your ene- "my which exist but in the distempered "bias of your own imagination. All noble "as is the count de St. Dorval, he is still "less illustrious by his birth than by his "virtues; even his errors are respectable, "since they flow from a mistaken sense of "right: his political and religious senti- "ments, which subject him to the odium "of rebellion and bigotry, are the prin- "ciples of his inheritance, not of his con- "viction; and the loyalty and toleration "of the baron de Montargis are probably "but offsprings of the same growth. It "is the motive, and not the act, by which "we are to be judged; and while the "heart remains untainted, the aberrations "of the mind are rather to be pitied than "condemned."

The emotions which betrayed themselves in the countenance of the baron, as he listened to his prisoner, spoke an agitation of mind that baffled expression; then, *while with* impassioned admiration he gazed

on her countenance, over which a kindling animation gradually diffused its fire as she spoke, he exclaimed: "Enviable St. Dor-" val! to be defended by such arms as " those, to be vindicated by such lips! " Oh! to what spell of magic dost thou " owe thy power over the heart of *her* who " has burst the strict barrier of female " delicacy, and in unseeming habit fol-" lowed thee even amidst the battle's " wildest fury; who has overcome her " sex's softness, and braved that death she " feared for thee alone; and who now, " even in the power of thy foe, boldly " vindicates thy errors, and with love's " true sophistry converts thy very failings " into virtues? Yes, thou shalt owe me " a second life, more precious than the " first: thy mistress, thy imprudent ten-" der mistress, shall be restored to thee. " Haply thy claims are prior to those my " heart once made, and hers, oh sweet " deception! appeared to sanction."

Tears of wounded pride, of shame, of

insulted modesty, stole o'er the deep tinted cheek of the prisoner; and, hurried away be the violence of her indignant emotion, she faintly replied: "Had I a thousand "lives, they were too few to sacrifice for "the preservation of count St. Dorval, "for he is—my father."

"Your father!" repeated the baron in the hurried accents of amazement: "Gra-"cious God! Imogen the daughter of "St. Dorval! Oh, Imogen! extraordi-"nary and mysterious being! who in "every situation, under every varying "aspect, still bearest about thee that light "of superiority which encompasses thee "like a glory, who still awakenest interest "and excitest amazement, speak; by that "beam of truth that shines in the can-"dour of thine eye, and mingles with the "persuasive graces of thy lip, I conjure "thee say who and what art thou? why "comest thou here? why wearest thou "this disguise? why art thou, erewhile "the timid novice of St. Dominick, wast-

" ing thy sweetness amidst the gloom of
" cloistral privacy, and now the daughter
" of the count St. Dorval, the heroine of
" an army? Oh! why must the eager
" heart wait upon the pleasure of cold
" detail to satisfy its longings? why does
" it not possess the intuitive power of
" piercing the veil of mystery which en-
" shrouds the fate of its object? why in
" the eloquent eyes of Imogen cannot
" Montargis read all his soul languishes
" to know, but which the wounded, the
" offended delicacy of St. Dorval's daugh-
" ter may indignantly refuse to his en-
" treaties?"

" Then you are," said Imogen in a tre-
mulous voice, recollecting her father's
last command, " the son of the baron de
" Montargis?"

" I am the son of him who was the
" baron de Montargis, who is by the
" king's royal pleasure the duke de Beau-
" villiers. Yet, oh my sweet enemy! for-
" get that I am so; still behold at your

" feet the humble minstrel of Provence,
" as when in those stolen and delicious
" hours of transient bliss he breathed upon
" this fair hand the secret sigh of his soul;
" still behold me with those partial eyes,
" whose thrilling glances sunk deep to my
" heart, and waked its every pulse to
" transport's liveliest throb."

The warm tide of reviving tenderness rushed o'er the kindling soul of Imogen. She beheld at her feet the object of that romantic faithful passion whose treasured idea, twined round every finer fibre of her heart, had long been the source of all her joy, the dream of her rest, the subject of her waking thought; whom again to behold under many a deceptive plea, hope had lured her from the seclusion of her youth; whom now beholding, appeared to her enamoured eye adorned with all those great and noble graces the humility of his former disguise had concealed from her view: a youthful and illustrious warrior, in whose eye the flame of valour beamed,

on whose lip the fire of genius and passion breathed. The haughtiness which dignified her manners was fled, the spirit which animated her countenance was extinct; the deep scarlet flush with which pride, wounded and indignant, coloured her cheek, faded to the rosy suffusion of tenderness chastened by modesty. Soft was the languor of her eye, and a thousand timid, tender, bashful graces, insinuated themselves into her air, her attitude, her voice, as she requested the baron to rise. The smile which accompanied the request was omnipotent.

The baron obeyed, and, encouraged by its sweetness, repeated his petition, nor petitioned in vain. Imogen, anxious to relate as he was to hear every thing that could remove the faintest suspicion inimical to the delicacy of her character, the refinement of her feelings, or the propriety of her conduct, entered with brief simplicity into the recent particulars of her life. A rosy confusion, a blushing earnest-

ness, veiled at first those graces of recitation with which nature had eminently endowed her; but as these soft effusions of bashfulness gradually vanished to the encreasing interest of her story, as she related the interview with her father, touched on the circumstances of his life, and dwelled on that affecting moment which restored her to a parent, the pathos, the energy of her natural and feeling eloquence, rose with the importance of her subject; while an unconscious sigh, a transient blush, a starting tear, betrayed the profound emotion of her sensible heart, and gave a higher finish to her detail than even the most brilliant figures of rhetoric could have bestowed. In slightly referring to the history of her father's life, she was unavoidably obliged to touch on the enmity which had so long subsisted between the houses of Montargis and de St. Dorval; yet she did it with a delicacy, an emotion, that evinced the deep regret it inspired in a heart which now more than ever

lamented the dreadful effects of political and religious dissension.

While she spoke, the baron hung over her enamoured; when she ceased, his eager eye still dwelled on the charms of her expressive countenance, his eager attention still hung upon the melody of her accents: he had given her sigh for sigh and tear for tear, and the silence which succeeded to her relation was the eloquence of a soul too much agitated by contending passions to commit the expression of its feelings to the inadequate power of language.

While still he gazed in silent emotion on the interesting daughter of his enemy, her cheek grew pale, her head drooped, her eye became dim, her lips quivered; the trembling and extended arms of the baron prevented her falling to the earth. The extreme fatigue she had undergone, the anxiety and violent perturbation which had agitated her mind, the pain of her slight wound, which now bled afresh, to-

gether with having tasted only a draught of water for more than thirty hours, and being wholly exhausted by the late extraordinary occurrence and the long narrative she had entered on, occasioned a weakness which she had felt stealing over her frame, and vainly endeavoured to conquer. An exclamation of horror and amazement burst from the lips of the baron as the bandage which bound her arm gave way, and the blood flowed copiously from the ill-dressed scar. Imogen, though faint, was not insensible; she endeavoured to assure him the wound was but slight. The baron tore off his scarf, bound it round her arm, and placed her on a couch; then administering some drops that lay on the table, and which seemed to revive his languid captive, he rushed out of the tent.

In a few minutes he returned, accompanied by the surgeon, who the night before had deemed the wound of the humble prisoner too inconsequent for his attention.

The whole nomenclature of the *materia medica* was now ransacked for technical terms to express its nature and magnitude: fawning obsequiousness lurked in every line of his countenance, and even his habitual and professional formality gave way to the impetuous and anxious impatience of the baron. As it was necessary the arm of the patient should be stripped, the baron retired; and while the surgeon examined and dressed the wound he threw out some hints, in the most respectful manner, that from the violent anxiety testified by the baron de Montargis, his patient must be of high rank, and constantly addressed her by the title of *madame*. Meanwhile two women of decent appearance entered the tent; the one held a bundle of female clothes, the other assisted the surgeon, who retired with a thousand apologies for having mistaken his noble patient for a prisoner of no consequence the preceding night in the hospital-tent; while Imogen, as much disgusted with his

time-serving meanness as she had b
with his inhumanity, was equally gla
see him depart and to find herself c
more in female society.

Her woman's heart rejoiced in this
storation to an intercourse with her
sex, even of an inferior species; and
their countenances she thought she r
those generic signs of the female charac
softness and humanity, which perhaps c
existed in the comparison she drew
tween their countenances and those of
warrior tribe by whom she had been la
surrounded. They civilly informed Im
gen they had been sent to wait on her
his excellency the baron de Montargis;
conducted her to the interior apartmen
the tent, which by its furniture seem
appropriated to repose. Here they spr
out the little wardrobe: it was the sim
garb of a French paysanne. Imogen,
lighted by this delicate mark of attent
in her amiable conqueror, exclaim
"This is an indulgence indeed!"

eagerly began to disencumber herself of her masculine attire, in which she had suffered some of modesty's most painful throes; while her delicacy triumphed that she had divested herself of the minstrel robe which she had so long cherished as a precious relic, and which might have intimated some fond truths to its former owner, more flattering to his vanity than to her pride.

"Yes, lady," said the woman, in answer to her exclamation, "you must doubtless "be happy to fling off your doublet and "hose, as I once was when I followed my "husband to the siege of Rouen in a sol-"dier's garb, for all the women were for-"bid the camp; and beshrew me, you are "in luck to get even such a dress as this, "for we soldiers' wives generally pack up "our whole wardrobes in our husbands' "knapsacks. My good man," she continued, assisting Imogen in the duties of the toilet, "when he was last scouring the "country, took this habit from a simple

"hind, who swore by the saints it was a "wedding garb for his lady mistress. Our "Lady pardon my husband! say I; but "then he swore that the hind looked like "a papist and a Leaguer, and so he took "three marks from him into the bar-"gain."

Habited in a boddice and skirt of coarse texture but snowy hue, her luxuriant hair fastened up to the back of her head with a silken band of dark-green, and playing over her temples in negligent disorder, Imogen contemplated the form the mirror reflected with a satisfaction that flushed her cheek, while a sly thought of "*self-*"*approving beauty*" stole on her gaze. The women, for whose attentions she was gratefully thankful, retired; and she returned to the apartment she had before occupied, where she found a page in waiting, and a collation spread with fairy elegance. Notwithstanding her long-enforced abstinence, she ate sparingly: the strong and still turbulent emotions of her heart

" subdued all feeling else save what beat " there;" and while her mind had " food for " meditation" even to access, she seemed almost unconscious of the want of grosser nourishment: yet the little she did eat refreshed and revived her; and having dismissed the page, she withdrew from the table, fell prostrate to the earth, and in the attitude of pious humility raised a heart still humbler in gratitude to the Author of all good, to whose providential care she owed the preservation of her father's life and liberty, her own present safety, and that flow of happiness which now succeeded to the load of anxiety and misery she had lately sustained.

Imogen had scarcely risen frrom her knees, and " *the beauty of holiness*" still shed its seraph expression on her countenance, when the baron entered. The nymph-like simplicity of her attire presented to his admiring eye such a form as poetical fancy attaches to the idea of Arcadian beauty.

"How much, my lord," said Imogen, "do I owe you for an attention so deli- "cate, so grateful?" casting her eyes over the dress his kindness had provided her, then modestly raised their grateful glances to his.

The baron took her hand, and, seating himself beside her, said: "You mistake, "lady; to me you owe nothing; I can "only claim the merit of construing your "blushes into their literal sense: they are "ever the eloquence, the rhetoric, which "modesty deigns only to use; and the "glow which delicate shame suffuses over "the cheek of lovely woman is the sacred "sign of vestal purity, which no man de- "serving the name will dare to violate. "Trust me, sweet lady, I am most pleased "that our rude camp could afford thee "even this garb, though more suited to "the chaste simplicity of thy taste than to "the lustre of thy rank: but nature has "stampt her letters patent of nobility on "thy soul, and in the elevation of those

" sentiments which gives to thy air and " countenance their noblest expression ; " nor could the shining diadem nor ermined " robe of peerage add a greater splendour " to the form which the divine light of vir- " tue and the heaven-stolen beam of genius " irradiates ! No, to the eye of Montargis, " the lady de St. Dorval is not more dig- " nified, more illustrious than the meek " and humble novice of St. Dominick." Then in a tone more tenderly familiar he added : " Oh ! at the sound of that name, " memory like lightning shoots athwart " each interval of bliss, and my raptured " senses doubt their fidelity as I gaze on " the form of *her* whom once to have " known is never to forget !"

" Never to forget !" repeated Imogen, with a smile half-reproachful : " Oh, my " lord ! had not this strange adventure " awakened recollection, memory had soon " resigned the last fading remembrance of " the novice of St. Dominick. Whate'er " the wayward destiny which led you to

" seek an asylum in humble guise within
" the chateau de Montmorell, whether the
" romantic spirit of adventure or the wild
" vicissitude of war, unvanquished by that
" destiny, you ever rendered it subservient
" to the purposes of the moment: you
" stooped to assimilate yourself to those
" you might have awed into conscious in-
" feriority; and your mind, like gold,
" which dissolving in baser metal blends
" itself with each minuter particle, yet
" still retains its own pure quality unal-
" loyed, ductile but undegraded, betrayed
" itself well versed in the world's sub-
" tilizing school. Cheating time where you
" could not enjoy it, o'er the dreary path of
" solitude and unvaried sequestration you
" scattered those flowers of dalliance which
" faded as they fell. Such, my lord,
" were your passing courtesies considered:
" sweet, perhaps, but not permanent;
" grateful, but transient."

The "eloquent blood" of Imogen ever betrayed the emotion which dictated the *sentiment* of her eloquent lips: the oblique

reference to those tender professions of the baron which his after-neglect had proved to be fleeting as the sighs which had stolen amidst their "honied words," rosed the check of Imogen with "the virgin crim-"son of modesty" and the deeper flush of pride; while the faint smile which hung upon the pensive softness of the baron's ardent gaze, seemed to owe its existence to that pleasure awakened by a reproach which a tender but wounded interest only could have excited:

"Yes," said he, "if I am to be ar-"raigned on the allegation of appearances, "I must indeed seem what you infer I am, "the mere wordling, whose heart seeking "only temporary gratification, like the in-"constant surface of a mirror, receives "every impression but retains none. Yet "since you have honoured me in the faint "recollection of those vows which breath-"ed the passion of a soul devoted with all "its energies to adore thee, and registered "in the face of heaven upon the hand of

" her whose purity is heaven's type, deem
" me not, sweet saint, in love a truant:
" but trust me that as the rose's essence
" precedes and e'en survives its own iden-
" tical and fair existence, so ere I beheld
" thee I nourished in my bosom's core a
" germ of love for thee reserved to ripen
" to perfection; and if it drooped beneath
" the chill of absence most enforced, be-
" lieve me that again at sight of thee it
" blooms, and sheds a fresher odour than
" when first thy genial influence flushed
" on its primy nature. And now, while
" in return for thy sweetly interesting and
" candid detail I pour the boundless con-
" fidence of a soldier's honest and un-
" practised heart into thine, wilt thou,
" fair maid, in pity to that heart's weak-
" ness, still suffer me to consider my lovely
" auditress in the light in which I first
" beheld her, the meek novice of St. Do-
" minick, not the overawing and illustri-
" ous lady de St. Dorval? Oh Imogen!
" the recollection of the former character

" will ever awaken the nerve where bliss
" is bred, while the latter—God of heaven!
" the daughter of St. Dorval!—Oh for-
" tune! why art thou still of love the un-
" vanquishable enemy? and thou, oh love,
" why dost thou twine around the heart
" those ties which breaking break it, yet
" twine them only for the finger of destiny
" to verse? But away with reflection! this
" hour shall be the commemorating æra
" of love's sweet birth; the expanded
" wing of joy shall soar in triumph, and
" guard the heart from care's intrusive
" gloom; and the sad realities of a fatal
" conviction shall lie subdued by the rosy
" influence of sweet illusion: fancy's fairy
" spell shall convert this warlike shelter
" into the dearly-remembered gallery of
" Montmorell, and the dignity of a peeress
" of France into the soul-dissolving soft-
" ness of the tender pitying Imogen; who
" hung, not unmoved, upon the min-
" strel's last-breathed vow, and whose eyes
" dropped precious dew the jealousy of

" love would have wrested from compas-
" sion, but that its insuperable fears for-
" bade the temerity of the golden hope."

Then, after a pause, the baron, casting down his eyes with that air of modesty which seemed to reprehend the necessity which obliged him to become the hero of his own tale, continued: " He who is born
" the favourite of fortune, who lisps his
" first accent in the bosom of indepen-
" dence, and is endowed with the com-
" mand over others before he has been
" taught the necessity of obtaining it over
" himself, enters life on its most level
" path, and cannot be supposed to meet
" with those incidents with which the
" vicissitudes of a less smiling destiny
" abound; which give interest to detail,
" render egotism venial, and furnish the
" historian with his most attractive facts,
" the poet with his brightest images.
" Rank and fortune were my birth-right.
" I was born to that which is the aim and
" object of mankind to obtain; for which

" every energy of the soul, every faculty
" of the mind, rushes into exertion: I
" was born to it; and those faculties, those
" energies, which might have enabled me
" to have acquired them, lay dormant, in
" the want of that necessity which is the
" primary stimulus of all human action.
" When consciousness first awakened in
" my infant mind, it found me reposing
" on the bosom of beauty: my eyes, from
" their first discriminating glance, dwelt
" on the loveliness and harmony of nature
" in the fairest epitome of her works,
" woman! Nourished on her smiles, over-
" whelmed by her caresses, sporting in her
" arms, catching my lisping accents from
" her lip of love, my soul received its first
" impression from the purity, the sub-
" limity of hers; and what it still pos-
" sesses of good is but the lingering trace
" of that sweet indelible impression. Julia
" de Ribemont resided in my grandfather's
" family during my mother's life. The
" long-declining health of that mother

"gave me constantly to the arms of her "beautiful friend; who, on my parent's "death, adopted me the child of her af- "fection, while my father returned the "kindness even by making her the idol of "his own. But,—"

The baron paused: his brow insensibly lost its mild expansion, and contracted its shade over his darkening eyes; and, after a moment's struggle, he resumed: "But "my father was deprived of this object of "his homage, and I lost my amiable mo- "ther: she was destined to boast a more "illustrious title, to become the mother "of Imogen. I was but five years of age "when I participated in my father's still "lamented loss; and memory goes no "further than the thrilling recollection "of the feelings the insinuating Julia "awakened in my young heart: the tears, "the lamentations, with which I pursued "her flight; or the hatred I conceived "against him, who I was soon taught to "know had torn her from me. Oh, you

" to whom the education, the forming of
" youthful minds, is consigned, tremble at
" the great, the solemn charge you un-
" dertake ! 'Tis you who fix that radical
" impression from whence those innume-
" rable branches emerge, whose closely-
" knit associations become the efficient
" source of all their virtues, of all their
" vices. If you would participate in the
" reward of the former, for the latter you
" are wholly accountable. The stream of
" time flows in vain over those traces
" stampt on the youthful heart, interwoven
" with its flexible fibres ; its soft obliviat-
" ing tide does but ameliorate, but can-
" not deface. In riper years, when my
" father spoke of the hereditary feuds of
" the houses de Montargis and de St. Dor-
" val, he would add, ' And 'twas this man
" who robbed me of my bride, who de-
" prived thy infant and motherless years
" of that mild guardian spirit which ho-
" vered around thee with more than a
" mother's tenderness.' Oh! that recol-

" lection thus revived breathed a deathless " spirit on the spark of discord illumined " in my youthful heart."

" A deathless spirit !" instinctively repeated Imogen : " oh, not a deathless " spirit ;" looking with a mild and deprecating glance in the face of the baron.

The blush which flitted over the cheek of the baron, drew its source from the delicacy he felt he had violated. Avoiding the soft but earnest looks of Imogen, he replied : " I speak, lady, under the in- " fluence of my *then* existing feelings, " which at that period stole their predo- " minant hue from the colour of their " opinions by whom I was surrounded. " But to be brief. The activity of my " father's mind, his long initiation in all " the profoundest mysteries of politics, car- " ried him to Paris ; and holding two high " stations at court, successively under the " two brothers, Charles the Ninth and " Henry the Third, he seldom visited his " provincial estates, but left me to be'

" educated at the chateau de Montargis,
" and to win back that popularity his long
" absence might eventually forfeit. Placed
" under the care of a rigid disciple of
" Luther, and who had been in his youth
" the friend of that extraordinary reformer,
" the harshness of my preceptor's mind
" communicated its chill severity to his
" taste and the studies selected for my
" pursuit were as dissonant to the native
" tone of my mind, as the disposition and
" sentiments of my tutor to the feelings
" of my heart, or the gay hilarity of my
" temper. He had borne a conspicuous
" part in those violent controversial strug-
" gles which so long tore and disgraced
" the Christian church; and his success
" had awakened in his mind an ardent
" passion for subtle argumentation, a love
" for whatever was difficult to be under-
" stood, and an ambition to be supposed
" capable of comprehending what was in
" itself unintelligible, which induced him
" to confine my studies to those works he

" himself approved, the subtleties of Aris-
" totle's philosophy, or the uninteresting
" and gladiatorial disputes of modern
" theologists. The play which such works
" gave to boyish ingenuity at first fasci-
" nated my attention, and I became as
" bigoted and pedantic as my tutor could
" desire; but as the light of reason dif-
" fused its influence o'er my faculties, as
" the latent perceptions of taste awakened
" into refinement, as passion's genial glow
" shed its influence o'er my heart and
" senses, I turned revoltingly from the
" crude regimen prescribed to my eager
" mind. A sentiment will be easier con-
" verted into its opposite, than moderated
" or restrained into an intermediate de-
" gree between the great extremes; and
" disgust soon pursued the recollec-
" tion of those studies which I had once
" engaged in with avidity. The authors
" of the Augustan day, the elegant poets
" of modern Italy, succeeded to the phi-
" losophy of Aristotle, the theology of

" Melancthon. I studied the musical " systems of Gui d'Arezzo, Jean deMuria, " and the more famed theorists of a later " day. The works of the celebrated " troubadours, Pierre Bidal and Arnaud " de Varvail,* fell into my hands. I " studied the Provençal dialect, and re- " collected I inhaled that air which was " once supposed to breathe inspiration. " The streams of my native Durance as- " sumed a new and classic interest, and I " wandered in poetic transport along the " banks of that delicious river, o'er whose " swelling waves the spirit of genius had " so often floated. I envied those high- " priests of gallantry who still awakened " the decaying embers of the illustrious " order of troubadours in Thoulouse, and " still presided o'er the laws of love, of " poesy, and song. I even determined to " emulate their talents, and to become a

* See a history of the Troubadours, by M. de St. Palaie, finished by the abbé Mellot.

" candidate for the golden violet insti-
" tuted by the accomplished Clemence
" d'Isaure, countess of Thoulouse, as the
" reward of poetical merit. I hastened
" to Thoulouse in the habit of a minstrel,
" and sung those verses to the harp which
" were the first effusions of my rustic
" muse. My youth and rank shed an
" extraneous merit on my lays they in-
" trinsically did not possess: the golden
" violet was adjudged me; and gratified
" ambition flushed her triumphs in my
" young aspiring heart. I was then scarcely
" sixteen, and the errors of youth in a
" literary sense generally find that tolera-
" tion which, in a moral one, is so seldom
" denied them. My indulgent father par-
" ticipated in my success, and though
" then at Paris, suffered me to remain at
" Thoulouse, to perfect myself in the ele-
" gant and useful exercises of the sword
" and horsemanship, until weariness or
" satiety should cancel the immunity.

" It was at this period, I formed a friend-

"ship with a young Englishman of rank,
"Robert Sidney,* the second son of sir
"Henry Sidney, brother to the immortal
"sir Philip, and nephew to the favourite
"of Elizabeth, the celebrated earl of Lei-
"cester; who was then at Thoulouse, on
"his return from Italy by France to Eng-
"land, under the care of his intelligent
"tutor, Mr. Savill,† and accompanied
"by another young Englishman of for-
"tune, Mr. Nevill. Fascinated by the
"manners, the talents, the solid and use-
"ful information, which distinguished this
"little groupe of foreigners from the fri-
"volous visitants which Italy so frequently
"sent us, and the volatile and unsteady
"though sanguine characters of the
"young Provençals, I clung to these
"amiable strangers, and so far insinuated
"myself into their favour, as to induce

* Afterwards earl of Leicester.

† See sir Philip Sidney's Letter to his brother Robert.

" them to accompany me back to Mon-
" targis, where they became my guests for
" some weeks.

" Under the guiding precepts, with the
" shining example, of his illustrious brother
" to light him on his way, the younger
" Sidney had travelled over the greater
" part of Europe, and was now returning
" to England, rich in the spoils of his accu-
" rate observation on men and manners:
" and when he dwelt with animation on the
" scenes through which he had passed, the
" characters he had mingled with, or the
" adventures he had encountered, I shrunk
" back upon myself in conscious inferio-
" rity, and secretly reprobated the fond
" apprehensions of my father, which had
" confined me so long within the safe
" limits of a domestic circle. But when
" my new friend spoke of his illustrious,
" his all-accomplished brother, who was
" by many years his elder; when I learnt
" that sir Philip Sidney, when little more
" than my age, had travelled through

" Europe, commanding attention from
" every ear, respect from every mind, af-
" fection from every heart; that the proud
" Austrian viceroy of the Netherlands
" treated him with more public honours
" than the ambassadors of sovereigns; and
" though a stranger, without title, power,
" or any of those alluring baits to popu-
" larity, he had been in election for the
" crown of Poland, a circumstance more
" glorious than if the diadem of a world
" had encircled his brow by inheritance;
" my bosom glowed, my heart beat, I felt
" as did Cæsar when he read of the juve-
" nile feats of Alexander. I accompanied
" my English friends to Paris: I threw
" myself at my father's feet; conjured him
" no longer to suffer his son, his only son,
" to waste the precious years of youth in
" inglorious indolence; but to permit me
" to visit that country which claimed sir
" Philip Sidney as her son, which then
" boasted of a Raleigh, an Essex, a Bacon,
" a Shakspeare! my entreaties were se-

"conded by the pressing instances of my
"new friends, and a polite invitation from
"sir Henry Sidney: my father's tender-
"ness yielded to those combined solicita-
"tions, and I was suffered to accompany
"those amiable Englishmen to their native
"country. I was received at Baynard
"Castle with the cordial welcome which
"distinguishes the old English hospitality
"from that of the continent; not only by
"sir Henry, who had just returned from
"his third expedition to Ireland as ord-
"deputy, but by the lady Mary Sidney,
"a daughter of the illustrious house of
"Northumberland, and by their incompa-
"rable son, on whom nature, fame, and
"fortune, seemed to vie in showering the
"choicest favours. As learned in the
"schools, as gallant in the field, as ele-
"gantly refined at the levee, as unaffect-
"edly endearing in his domestic circle,
"hyperbole itself must fail in the attempt
"to do justice to his illustrious character.
"Although his own poetic genius was

" sufficient to command immortality; the " Mæcenas of his day, he had the true " greatness of mind to encourage merit in " others wherever he found it, unbiassed " by the narrow views of policy or osten- " tation. It was at his house I became ac- " quainted with the celebrated Edmund " Spenser; his friend John Chalkhill, the " pastoral poet; Mr. Fairfax, the elegant " translator of Tasso, and William Shak- " speare, the first dramatic poet of this or " perhaps any other age. There too I be- " came known to Sir Philip's friend and re- " lative, the all-accomplished Grevill lord " Brooke, who united so much solid learn- " ing to all the attractive blandishments of " poetical genius; sir Walter Raleigh, of " whose universal capacity it has been said, " he was born only for what he undertook; " the witty sir John Harrington, who has " flung over the splendid images of Ariosto " the graces of English drapery; and the " earl of Essex, the hero of his nation, " the idol of his sovereign's heart, and

"undoubtedly one of the most elegant "writers of the day.

"Among those bright Pleiades, a coun- "tryman of my own shone a star of no "inferior magnitude; but his lustre was "rather the reflection of superior virtue "than superior talents. The chevalier de "Sorville was then a visitor at Baynard "castle: he had many years before formed "a connection with sir Philip, when the "latter was on his travels; he had met "him at Paris during the fatal eve of St. "Bartholomew. Of different persuasions "they had been equally active in the cause "of humanity, when the bigotry of mis- "taken religion aimed a vital blow at her "heart; till the benevolent temerity of "the chevalier rendered him incapable of "further exertion, and the perils which "surrounded him obliged the young Eng- "lishman to seek personal safety in the "house of the then English ambassador, "the celebrated sir Francis Walsingham.

"As the friend and relative of the count

"St. Dorval, I met the cordial advances "of the amiable de Sorville with coldness "and reluctance. His superior mind "smiled compassionately on the prejudice "of my boyish unformed character, and "to his persevering kindness I now owe "the proudest boast of my life, that of "being his friend.

"The visit of this virtuous man to "England was not merely a visit of friend-"ship or curiosity: his mind still point-"ing with invariable impulse to the mag-"netic attraction of benevolence, he had "come to England in the hope of amelio-"rating the fate of the hugonot emi-"grants, whom the cruelty of Philip II. "had expatriated from the Netherlands, "by his interest with the British minister "through the medium of the Sidney fa-"mily. He had also then formed a reso-"lution of visiting most of the jails in "Europe, whose wretched inhabitants "have since experienced the generosity of "his nature, (to which his open purse was

" ever inadequate) and the effects of his " medical skill, which his study of physic " had rendered eminent.

" Need I add that, in such society, " every moment was more precious than " an age of common-place existence? " that every better faculty of my young " and ardent mind was roused into exer- " tion; and that spirit of emulation, " breathing o'er those embers of nature's " fire, which the lulling powers of a flat- " tering fortune had suffered almost to " become extinct, animated my wishes to " become all that I most admired in those " whose illustrious characters made me " feel the inconsequence of rank and " riches, unaccompanied by virtue, ta- " lents, or genius? My father allowed " me a brilliant establishment; and at my " own desire my preceptors were English. " While with the younger Sidney I pur- " sued the liberal studies marked out for " him by his all-intelligent brother, or " practised those manly and fashionable

"exercises in which the young English "nobility excel, sir Philip Sidney was ap- "pointed governor of Flushing by Eliza- "beth. His departure shed a gloom, not "only over his family, but his country, "that seemed prophetic: for, after having "signalized himself in a manner so heroi- "cal as awakened even the admiration of "his enemies, at the battle of Zutphen, "where his third horse was killed under "him, he received a mortal wound, of "which he languished twenty-five days, "and died in the flower of his age, the "meridian of his glory.

"After a residence in England of nearly "two years,—a residence prolonged by my "father's wishes, as France was at that "period the scene of general warfare and "civil discord,—I returned to Paris in "1589, anxious to follow in the track of "heroism marked out by the illustrious "Henry of Navarre, but tied by my family "interest to the house of Valois. On the "side of the king of Navarre I dared not

" draw my sword; against him I would not.
" Almost personally attached to this amia-
" ble monarch, worshipping the heroic vir-
" tues of his character, convinced of the
" justice of his claims, and compassionat-
" ing those injuries which the power and
" hatred of Catherine had so long heaped
" on him, I had no alternative but to be
" an inactive spectator of his unremitted
" sufferings; or to fly in the face of my
" father and my king, and join the stand-
" ard of the persecuted, but ever magna-
" nimous Henry.

" It was not till the two kings embraced
" on the plain of Tours, that I had the
" happiness of judging from actual obser-
" vation, of the illustrious virtues of that
" character, which even the exaggerater
" Fame had but faintly blazoned. Shortly
" after Henry III. was murdered; and
" my father was among the first of the
" nobility who acknowledged Henry IV.
" as the lawful sovereign of France, and
" attached themselves to his service. Hum-

"bly following in that luminous path,
"o'er which the splendid achievements of
"the king shed their glorious rays, from
"that moment I have revolved round the
"monarch as a cynosure of valour, by
"whose beams I might hope to shine with
"reflected light. I have fought beneath
"his eye, in all those engagements which
"the obstinacy of faction has multiplied
"almost beyond calculation; and that I
"have been publickly distinguished by his
"unmerited notice, is a circumstance less
"grateful to my feelings and my heart,
"than that I have been honoured by his
"private attention and personal regard.
"But while I thus weary your patience,
"my indulgent auditress, by a tale so di-
"vested of interest, let me hasten to that
"period whose golden aspect shines re-
"splendent o'er the subject hours of time,
"and lives eternal in the records of the
"heart; that sweet period in which I felt
"a new sense of existence steal o'er my

"awakening senses, in which I first be-
"held Imogen of Montmorell.

"A love of arms has been the unaliena-
"ble inheritance of a Montargis, since
"first in the fields of Palestine they re-
"ceived the honour of knighthood from
"St. Louis. Deep versed in the achiev-
"ments of the heroes of France, from
"the prowess of Charlemagne to the he-
"roic deeds of Henry IV., I burned to
"draw my sword with emulating vigour,
"and to gather those laurels in my youth,
"on which the brow of age could repose
"in the proud consciousness of self-appro-
"bation. But circumstances, already
"enumerated, prevented my engaging in
"the civil wars of France; and the in-
"testine discords which agitated Italy, and
"which were rather the struggling efforts
"of banditti for the supremacy of slaugh-
"ter and rapine, offered no colour of ex-
"cuse to a man of honour to join in
"them: besides, my ardent passion for

" arms was tempered by a sentiment which
" had been the object of early reflection,
" strengthened into principle, that he who
" draws an *offensive* sword, who endea-
" vours to purchase fame by the wanton
" destruction of his species, even though
" success sheds her roses o'er the bloody
" track of his deathful career, and the
" wreath of conquest blushes round his
" victor brow, is but an *assassin*. Let the
" sword of the valiant leap from its scab-
" bard, in the cause of oppression; let it
" deal destruction to those who would
" violate the liberty of their country, in-
" fringe upon the sanctity of its laws, who
" would aim a blow at the life of a wise
" and virtuous sovereign, or impiously
" dare to profane the sacred, the immuta-
" ble, rights of mankind: but let it repose
" for ever, with the spirit of unawakened
" vengeance, in honourable peace, rather
" than stain its polished surface with the
" blood of the invalid, the enslaved, or un-
" resisting."

A brighter glow burnt on the cheek of the baron as he spoke, the animation of his eyes kindled into radiance, and the tones of his voice rose beyond their ordinary round and harmonious pitch: then after a pause, while the kindling countenance of Imogen reflected back the fire of his own, and her half-moving lips seemed to articulate those sentiments which her heart so truly, so sympathetically echoed, he added, modestly casting down his eyes:

"Some little opposition of sentiment and "conduct brought on the displeasure of the "*then* reigning king,* and the strongest "disapprobation of my father. I was sent, "a willing exile, to the chateau de Montar-"gis. Fleet and pleasant were the hours of "my unbroken solitude; the soft recollec-"tions of the heart gave me back those ob-"jects so beloved in childhood, and awak-"ened a lingering thrill of those transports "which usher in the golden dawn of life.

* Henry III.

"Music and poetry again received my "homage; nor did their blandishments "alone occupy my time and thoughts. "No baron in the south of France boasted "a more numerous vassalage than my fa- "ther: brought up and educated amongst "the young serfs of the extensive domain "of Montargis, frequently the participa- "tor of their rural sports, and their com- "petitor in rural games, I had acquired "an interest in their hearts, which neither "my rank nor fortune could have en- "dowed me with. France boasted not a "bolder or more vigorous race of pea- "santry. The chain which feudal immu- "nity vested in the hands of power sat "lightly o'er them; and the spirited ar- "dour even of comparative independence "warmed their minds, and mingled its "spirit with that true provincial hilarity "which their skies for ever blue, their "gales for ever genial, inspire.

"I always delighted in that antique pu- "rity of morals, that still retained charac-

" ter of ancient manners, and that still-
" cherished taste for poesy and song,
" which from its first colonization distin-
" guished Provence; and I now delighted
" in embodying those of its animated and
" hardy youths, whom at a future day I
" should claim as my own immediate sub-
" jects, into a little military phalanx, more
" precious to my heart than that of Alex-
" ander's, all invincible as it was, could
" have been to his: for every artery of
" that heart swelled with a kind of colla-
" teral affection for those, who would as
" willingly have sacrificed their lives for
" me, as I would have laid down mine for
" them. Well skilled in the theory of
" tactics and use of arms, though little
" versed in the practice, my own unwea-
" ried endeavours, and the assistance of
" some veteran officers belonging to the
" garrison of Avignon, soon rendered my
" little army one of the best disciplined
" in the realm. The vigour of constitu-
" tion, the ardour of youth, the spirited

" vivacity of their province, all conduced
" to perfect them into dauntless and able
" soldiers.

" Accustomed alternately to wield the
" instruments of war or the implements of
" agriculture, they were now enabled to
" defend the fields they cultivated; and,
" proud of their newly acquired preroga-
" tive, laid down those arms they wielded
" during the winter season, and resumed
" the cutting-knife of the summer vin-
" tage. When time and the fond solici-
" tations of nature restored me to my fa-
" ther's heart, I hastened to Paris, and
" continued in the new king's army,* hur-
" ried on by the perpetual vicissitudes of
" civil war, almost forgetful of my little
" provincial forces: when the discomfi-
" ture of his majesty before the walls of
" Rouenne, and his doubtful hopes of
" success before those of Neufchatel, called
" for the most vigorous exertions on the

* Henry IV.

"part of his adherents. Several of the "nobility had flown to their castles, armed "their vassals, and returned to the field "with these hastily embodied and ill-orga- "nized troops,* who had only animal "courage to supply the deficiency of mi- "litary skill. It was then the recollec- "tion of my *corps de reserve* started to my "mind; and in the same moment they "were offered and accepted by the king. "The difficulties however I had to en- "counter were such, as those noblemen "who had brought their auxiliary troops "to the royal camp were not exposed to.

"I had to lead a considerable body "from the most southern to almost the "most northern part of France, and "through those provinces thickly scat- "tered over with the enemy's forces: but

* In the memoirs of the Duke de Sully, we find that faithful minister more than once flying from the royal camp to the chateau de Rosni, and returning to the king with men and provisions.

" to the adventurous mind of youth, each
" obstacle is but a resistless lure to hazard-
" ous enterprize.

" The king, with fatherly solicitude,
" warned me of the perils that hung on
" the undertaking; but his tender anxiety,
" which buried the interest of the sovereign
" in the safety of the subject, only acted
" as a stimulus to my intention.* Dis-
" guised in the habit of a Provençal min-
" strel whom I had brought with me to
" the camp, mounted on his gaudily ca-
" parisoned horse, with my harp and pro-
" fessional badge before me, I left the

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* During the civil wars of France this romantic masquerading in perilous exigencies was by no means unfrequent; and the chivalrous enthusiasm of the times had communicated its peculiarities not only to the military spirit, but even to the amorous passion, of the day. Thus we find Henry the Great disguised as a peasant, bending beneath a heavy burden, passing through the heart of the enemy's army, to visit his beautiful mistress, Gabrielle D'Estrées, at her father the lord de Coucy's castle in Picardy.

" walls of Neufchatel on the day that his
" majesty withdrew his army. The native
" romance of my character, the novelty
" of my adventure, the sanguine glow of
" expectation, and the flushing hopes of
" success, swelled my heart with pleasure,
" and animated the spirit of enterprize
" almost beyond the bound of temerity.
" Not content with passing in safety along
" the skirts of the enemy's camp during
" my first day's journey, I determined on
" the second to follow the example of
" Alfred, and, under cover of my min-
" strelsy, plunge into the heart of the
" Leaguers' army, become master of their
" intentions, the strength of their forces,
" and, rich in the spoils of my ingenuity,
" return to the king before I proceeded to
" Provence. But not to weary thee, sweet
" lady, with the loitering details of *egotism*,
" suffice it to say, that having entered the
" camp, been loaded with the caresses of
" the soldiery, and even introduced to the
" tent of the heroic prince of Parma, and

" the duke de Mayenne, I was discovered
" by an officer of the royal army who
" had lately gone over to the League;
" and, according to the inviolable laws of
" war, I was condemned to expiate my
" imprudence by my life. One alterna-
" tive only was left me, to unite myself
" and my interests to those of the League.

" To you I need not say, I was pre-
" pared to die: but the policy of the
" League gave deliberation to all their
" measures, and, instead of being led to in-
" stant death, I was conveyed to the castle
" of N———, a strong hold of the League,
" and strictly guarded. The only indul-
" gence allowed me was my harp. Tor-
" tured by the insupportable agonies of
" that suspence which my doubtful fate
" awakened, torn by the cruel supposition
" of my father's sufferings for my loss,
" pressed to the earth by that profound
" disappointment which hung on the death
" of my sanguine hopes, and weary of a
" confinement which no friendly visitation

" enlivened, no social intercourse amused,
" in the strains of my favorite and national
" instrument I strove to lull the sad per-
" turbations of my mind, the cruel disap-
" pointment of my hopes. It was on the
" last evening of my first month's confine-
" ment that, seating myself at the grates
" of my prison casement, I drew my harp
" towards me, and, sunk by the oppres-
" sive conviction that, while my country
" and my king called for my exertions,
" while my heart throbbed with ardour,
" while every nerve thrilled with irritation,
" I was wasting life away in the confines
" of a prison, with no hope of release but
" what a threatened death held out, I
" struck a few low chords, and murmured
" out the plaintive sonnet of Tasso, written
" during his long and unjust imprison-
" ment, and which so simply, so affect-
" ingly, depicts the sorrows of his heart.

" Tu che vai in Pindo
" Ivi pende mia citra ad un cipresso
" Salutala in mio home e dille poi
" *Chio* son dagli anni e da fortuna oppresso."

"Tears, such as those which haply in "the bitterness of his heart fell from the "eyes of the Italian bard as he indited "these lines, fell on the chords of my "harp as I sung them; and, vanquished "by the hopeless influence of despon-"dency, my hands fell from the instru-"ment, the air died on my lips. At that "moment a voice without the grate took "up the unfinished air, and answered to "my plaints in the well-known dialect of "my native province. If my recollection "assists me right, the sonnet ran thus:

"Let not hope expire in the heart of "the valiant. What suffering is support-"able, if that which arises from our virtue "and our courage is not to be endured? "Montargis is in the hands of his ene-"mies; but a power higher than they "possess hovers round him with the wings "of safety. Sweet and omnipotent is its "influence; it shall rescue him from dan-"ger, and plunge him into a slavery more "precious than freedom, whose fetters are "roses, whose——"

The baron suddenly stopt; then casting down his eyes, added: "But the rest "of this wild and mysterious strain has "escaped recollection. Suffice it to say, "that while I hung in amazement on the "sound it suddenly ceased. When hope "illumines her lamp in the cell of cap-"tivity, the dungeon's noxious vapour "and chilling gloom evaporate, and the "captive revels in the sweet anticipation "of ideal liberty; despair flies his heart, "and smiling expectation smooths the "pensive furrow of his care-knit brow. "From the moment I heard those strains "of native melody, which embodied the "belief of a speedy emancipation, I be-"came insensible to the shackles of my "froward destiny. Mysterious as were "the sentiments of the song, they lured "back hope to my sinking heart; and in "a variety of wild surmises, vague expec-"tations, and flattering thoughts, passed "away a night despair no longer rendered "wakeful. The impatient weariness of "*suspence* hung heavily on the lagging

"hours of the succeeding day, and my "heart welcomed in the pensive approach "of evening with a throb of rapture long "unknown to its languid pulsation. Again "I seated myself at the casement, struck "a few chords on my harp, and accom- "panied a provincial air with my voice. "I paused in all the anxiety of intense "expectation, but no note of sympathy "echoed back the strain. My heart "trembled o'er the wreck of my hopes.

"Again I played; again I paused, but "paused in vain: and despair and disap- "pointment rose over the ruin of my "treacherous expectations: and yet, ere "the first faint beam of morning played "through the grating of my prison-win- "dow, free as the fragrant air I breathed, "I found myself a league from the town "of N——. It seemed the work of "magic, and conviction almost refused "its suffrage to the testimony of the "senses."

"And by what extraordinary means,

"my lord," interrupted Imogen, with a look and accent of intense curiosity, "did "you so suddenly regain your freedom?"

The rich colouring of the baron's cheek flushed to the deepest tints of crimson. "Pardon me," said he in a voice of hesitation: "over the mystery of my eman- "cipation suffer the finger of silence to "weave her impenetrable veil: 'tis honour "that commands, gratitude that imposes "it; and delicacy forbids that revelation "pride might triumph to effect." The baron paused and sighed; Imogen caught the warm infection of his blush, sighed back his sigh, and pursued his downcast eye with a glance in which no common curiosity, no moderate interest, shone; then hastily withdrawing her all-demanding gaze from the uplifted eye of the baron, she bowed her head, and he continued: "During the tedious three months which "in desponding inactivity I passed in the "limit's of my prison's cell, the opposing "armies of France, led by their respective "brave and noble chiefs, had undergone

"a series of warlike vicissitudes, which, "perplexed and confused, mocked the "power of accurate delineation to record. "To the sieges of Rouen and Neufchatel "succeeded several splendid victories gain-"ed by the king over the Leaguers, who "owed their final preservation to that "wonderful retreat of their general the "duke of Parma, which fame shall trum-"pet to admiring ages till her last blast "shall die into eternity. It was during that "period of awful suspense that the two "armies lay scattered along the shores of "the Seine; that of the king lulled into "proud but delusive security by recent "success, that of the league on the eager "watch to seize some golden opportunity "of redressing their losses and escaping "the vigilance of the watchful conqueror; "that the duke of Parma, at the head of "his forces, in the space of one short "night, crossed the rapid Seine over a "slight and precarious bridge of boats; "and to this astonishing stratagem the

"illustrious hero owed the preservation of "his glory, and, what must have been "dearer to the heart of the man, the "safety and lives of the forces he com-"manded.

"The following morning presented to "the astonished gaze of the self-wrapt "royalists a scene that appeared almost "under the influence of magical operation; "a desolated plain, where a few hours before "a splendid armament spread its numerous "and gaudy multitude, now appeared to "their eye unmarked even by a single trace "of that pompous retinue of war, the splen-"did panoply of military establishment, "which in the sunbeam of the preceding "evening glittered to their eyes, or of the "busy bustling murmur of a camp's unbri-"dled licence, which the stillness of the "midnight breeze had wafted to their ears.

"An action so congenial to the spirit "of the king, even though performed by an "enemy, called forth in his generous heart "the liveliest sympathy of admiration;

" and the successful stratagem of his rival,
" far from depressing his spirits, only
" served as a stimulus to an exertion of
" corresponding heroism. He instantly
" assembled a council of war, and pro-
" posed the immediate pursuit of the
" enemy over the narrow pass of the pont de
" l'Arch. But the council of Henry, like
" his army, was composed of those whose
" views, interests, religions, and princi-
" ples, were equally opposed, and ever
" kept alive a mutual distrust and differ-
" ence of opinion with respect to mea-
" sures, which frequently frustrated the
" best-designed projects of their king.

" In the instance of this proposal only,
" however, the crude contrarieties of faction
" seemed to blend into one united mass
" of opposition against the bold and poli-
" tic measure proposed by their king. The
" heart of Henry received a profound
" wound by this opposition; but the vault-
" ing hopes of his magnanimous emulation
" were forced to swim with the torrent of

" popular opinion; and that year's cam-
" paign being concluded, he resolved to
" turn the opinion of his council to some
" account, by granting a truce to the
" harassing fatigues of war, and giving
" that repose to his troops that would
" cheer and invigorate them for future
" action. With that lavish generosity,
" which his liberal nature so frequently
" suffers to degenerate into an imprudence
" by which he is ever a sufferer, he distri-
" buted all the money he possessed among
" his soldiers, and permitted the officers to
" return to their respective homes, until
" the urgency of the times should again
" call on their exertions. Then, deter-
" mining to seize on this temporary eman-
" cipation from the blood-stained shackles
" of war, and convert it into an æra of
" blissful enjoyment, the king resigned
" himself to another species of bondage,
" whose chains are of roses, but of roses
" not always thornless. The royal Henry,
" ever alive to the allurements of pleasure

" when the claims of duty did not oppose
" her witchcraft spell, was at this period
" in the first stage of that passion which
" the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrees still
" keeps alive in his usually inconstant
" heart. His mind, harassed by the weary-
" ing oppositions of faction, the change-
" ful anxiety of war's vicissitudes, sought
" a solace in those rich blisses love alone
" bestows; and, accompanied by a few
" chosen friends, he set out for Picardy,*
" the residence of his mistress, to gratify

* Henry the Fourth, when in pursuit of the prince of Parma, stole away from the army, and went to visit, for the first time, the beautiful Gabrielle at Couvres. He contented himself with eating bread and butter at the gate, that he might not raise any suspicions in her father: afterwards, mounting his horse, he said he was going towards the enemy, and the fair one should see what deeds he would perform through his passion for her.

See *Pere Mathieu*, vol. ii. p. 59.

Mademoiselle d'Estrees, the most beautiful woman of the age she lived in, was daughter to Antoine d'Estrees, lord of Couvres, of the most ancient fa-

" the longings of his enamoured heart.
" Such was the situation of affairs when I
" fled from the prison of N——. Instead
" of going to Picardy, where my father
" held the government of a town, and the
" king then resided, I determined to con-
" tinue the route, and prosecute the in-
" tention which first led me from the
" camp.

" To thee I will confess that the expe-
" rienced disappointment of my romantic
" views had not yet dried up the source
" of enthusiasm from whence they sprung;
" that I was still enamoured of a project
" which had for its object the service of
" my king; and that I felt myself bound
" to realize a voluntary offer made with a
" confident certainty of performance, even
" at a risk imminent as that I had already

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mily in Picardy. She was forced by her father to marry Nicholas d'Amerval, lord of Liancourt, but afterwards continued to live publicly as the king's mistress till her death.

" encountered. I determined therefore to
" proceed to Provence, embody there my
" little phalanx, and march to Picardy
" to join the king, who it was already
" rumoured intended to reassemble his
" forces in that province, where he had as
" yet only shewn himself in the lists of
" love. The only pang to which my heart
" was alive, at that moment of sanguine
" expectation, was that awakened by the
" recollection of my father, who was still
" uncertain of the fate of his only son;
" while I was equally uncertain whether
" my adventure and imprisonment had
" reached his ears; but I preferred pro-
" longing his anxiety a little to disappoint-
" ing his hopes.

" The sun had not imbued the horizon
" with his golden waves when I found
" myself a league and a half from the
" town of N——. Here, ascending an
" eminence, I paused, and turned my eyes
" towards the lofty turrets of my late pri-
" son, which, bearing their dark grey

" heads above the morning mists, rose on
" my gaze, like the gloomy visions of
" my departed sufferings. All I had en-
" dured there rushed across my mind in
" comparative force with the feelings and
" situation of the present moment. Oh, my
" sweet friend ! liberty, like health, must
" be lost or suspended ere its blessings can
" be truly estimated. He who has ne'er in-
" haled the dungeon's poisonous vapour;
" who has ne'er thrown his dim and hope-
" less glance o'er the viewless space of its
" dark and narrow limits; who has ne'er
" hung upon the joyless stillness of its
" awful silence, to catch one wished-for
" human sound ; or cast an eager longing
" look through the grated loop-hole of his
" cell, to catch one beam of long excluded
" light, feels not, conceives not, how much
" on the enjoyment of natural and ra-
" tional liberty rests the primary source
" of all human felicity ; and that each re-
" turning day, which gives the light of
" heaven to his eye, the breath of nature

"to his senses, the power of renovated
"and unrestricted motion to his frame
"(blessings insensibly, unthankfully en-
"joyed), renews that covenant by which,
"in the first moment of existence, God
"endowed his creatures with a natural
"source of happiness and enjoyment. As
"I turned my eyes from the gloomy aspect
"of my prison's awful turrets, and looked
"round on the sweet and sublime scene
"that even to infinity spread before my
"delighted gaze; when the dew of heaven
"shed its refreshing tears on my aching
"head; when the sun's kindling glories
"flung their cheering rays around me,
"and the morning's vigorous fragrant
"breeze breathed health and spirit o'er
"my senses; when all I felt, and all I be-
"held, partook of the perfection, the har-
"mony, the love of Him by whom they
"were created; even in that moment of
"sublimated feelings I struck a few chords
"on my harp, still the companion of my
"wanderings, and felt as if inspiration

" descended round me from heaven. I
" knelt and played, with emotions such as
" the royal prophet felt when religious
" enthusiasm awoke his harp's inspired
" strains; while the tear of rapture and of
" gratitude dried on my burning cheek.
" Yes, lady, 'tis to thee I will confess
" what the world would deride as romantic
" weakness; to thee confess, that a sol-
" dier's often blood-stained cheek blushed
" not to receive the tear religious grati-
" tude had extracted; for it is for a mind
" like thine only to feel those pure, those
" sublime emotions which rarefy and sub-
" limate the soul of man to an essence of
" heaven itself."

" Oh!" exclaimed Imogen, while her half-raised eye floated in tears of sympathy, " to few are given such refined capabilities " of feeling; to those only whom heaven " creates symbolic of its own perfection, " connecting, by an intermediate degree " of excellence, the Almighty to his crea- " tures, man to God!"

The soul-beaming eyes of the baron pursued the kindling animation, the increasing tenderness, of Imogen's looks; and after a pause, such as the heart and imagination love to prolong, yet which covered the cheek of Imogen with blushes, and communicated a soft and indefinable agitation to the air and countenance of the baron, he replied: "If the rapture such "feelings awaken can admit of an extra- "neous increase, it is bestowed by the "sweet consciousness that those refined "powers of emotion and thought are not "a solitary undivided bliss, but, like every "other joy of the soul, rise in the scale of "rapture in proportion as it is participated. "Oh God! who that has a heart to *feel* "has *not* felt the vast difference that lies "between the enjoyment which wakes into "solitary existence, and dies as it lives, "and that thrilling transport which steals "its birth from the glowing, the refined "communication of two kindred souls? "Then, Imogen, when even the most

" elevated power of language refuses its " expression to the vivid, the heart-dis- " solving feelings, then, my sweet friend! " when the eye's soul-sent glance, the " cheek's vital blush, the sigh's rapturous " heave, and even (seizing her hand) the " pulse's kindred throb, perpetuate the " silent communion, such as the ignorant " and unfeeling suppose disembodied spirits " only hold——" The baron paused: the hand he held trembled in his ardent grasp; the melting look his eye pursued shrunk beneath the expression of his burning glance; the heart to which he appealed throbbed with soft but obvious violence. " Imogen! oh Imogen!" he added, raising her hand to his lips, " suffer " me even now to believe we illustrate " the sweetest truth the heart ever sub- " scribed to; for now, oh sure, we feel " together!"

It was not till after a silence, a dangerous silence, of some minutes, that Imogen released a hand that blushed with the warm

impression of the baron's lip; and, with a faint smile and tremulous accent, demanded if he believed the interest his story had awakened in her bosom did not suffer from this long interruption? The baron, starting as from a dream "that wrapt him "in Elysium," endeavoured to collect his scattered thoughts, and reassumed his detail: "I continued my solitary way with "a rapid and silent step, pausing at in- "tervals to catch the fancied sound of "pursuit, and then hurrying on towards "a small town on the frontiers of Cham- "pagne, which I intended to make the "goal of that day's journey. This I "reached in safety before sunset. Here "I purchased a horse with what money I "had left, and wrote to my father.* Re- "freshed by the first night's sweet and "undisturbed slumber I had long enjoyed, "(while fancy still gave to my ear the ac-

* Regular posts were first established in France by Henry the Fourth.

" customed foot-fall of my guard), I arose
" before dawn; and mounting my new-
" purchased steed, and slinging my harp
" behind me, I proceeded on my journey
" with renovated strength and spirits. The
" day was mild and beautiful, and I was
" met by several groups of peasants, who
" demanded specimens of my tuneful art,
" and endeavoured, by many hospitable
" offers, to lure me to their humble dwel-
" lings; while they lamented the decay of
" my profession, which was fast falling
" into disrepute. The night of this day I
" passed in the cottage of a wood-cutter,
" whose roof resounded to the echo of that
" merriment and festivity my harp awaken-
" ed; while his numerous and charming
" family overwhelmed me with gratitude
" and caresses for the amusement I af-
" forded them. When wearied with
" dancing, they crowded round me, and
" demanded the tale of other times; and
" their eager, their expressive counte-
" nances glowed as they listened to the

" feats of genii and fairii, of giants and " warriors; the young clinging to me in " all the energy of unsubdued feeling and " animated curiosity, the old listening in " sober and undivided attention. Never " did I feel more strongly how much " sweeter it is to give than to receive " pleasure; never did I triumph more in " the possession of my little talents than in " that moment, when I felt conscious that " it was to their influence alone I owed " the admiration, the respect, the wel- " come, that shone in every countenance. " The smiles I awakened were not the " sycophantic leer of interest paid to for- " tune; the embrace I received was not " the pressure of servility allured by rank. " Oh! the vast pleasure in being loved, in " being respected for one's self alone!" The baron fixed his impassioned glance on Imogen's face, and read in the expression of her eloquent countenance the corresponding sentiments of her full heart; then with a long-drawn sigh continued:

" Pleased with my adventure, I courted
" a similar fate the following night, and
" again became the nocturnal guest of a
" peasant's dwelling; and the novelty which
" an intercourse with these children of na-
" ture possessed shed an extraneous charm
" over the pleasure such an intercourse
" awakened. The sphere of my (hitherto
" limited) affections extended to receive
" the sentiments these my lowly brethren
" excited; and I felt the natural affinity
" as strong which united me to the poor
" and lowly as when it bound me only to
" my equals; convinced that virtue and
" genius are the only natural distinctions
" which raise man above his fellows. It
" was on the evening of my third day's
" journey that I found my musing mind
" had led me some leagues from my des-
" tined route; and that, instead of pur-
" suing my way to the southern skirts of
" Champagne, I had taken the road to
" the central part of the province, over
" which several marauding parties of the

"enemy's troops were scattered. The "sun had already withdrawn his last "beams from the summits of the highest "trees of a forest which lay to the east, "when, from an opening in that part of "the road which flanked a hill near whose "brow I rode, I perceived a numerous "patrole crossing the path I was about to "take. Sensible of my danger, I turned "my horse's head, doubled the angle of "the hill, and, while I fancied the sound "of pursuit every moment met my ear "more distinctly, I reached the borders "of the forest. At that instant the deep "red clouds which for some time had "floated, like vast meteors, in the at-"mosphere, darkened into impenetrable "gloom; then drawing together with "electric force, burst with a horrid crash, "and discharged torrents of rain, while "the thunder's distant growl gradually "deepened into peals that seemed to shake "the foundation of the earth, and the "gloom of impenetrable darkness was at

" intervals made visible by streams of liv-
" ing fire. Scared by a flash of lightning,
" my wild and ill-trained steed plunged
" madly on, and, before I could check his
" headlong course, I found myself in the
" centre of the forest. Here I alighted,
" threw my horse's bridle over a withered
" stump, and, covering my little harp with
" my mantle, proceeded to the shelter the
" wide-spreading branches of a tree af-
" forded; when the animal, frightened by
" some electric fire that sunk into the
" earth at his feet, snapt his bridle, and
" fled with a velocity that mocked the
" hope of pursuit.

" While labouring under the unpleasant
" sensations such an accident and such a
" situation were calculated to awaken, I
" perceived, through the dripping foliage,
" a ray of light the surrounding darkness
" rendered conspicuous. Its dusky hue
" convinced me it was emitted from some
" distant casement; and, animated by the
" hope of finding an asylum for the night,

" I struggled through the briars and un-
" derwood that opposed my passage; and,
" after an hour's painful walk, pursuing
" the trembling beacon that at intervals
" wholly disappeared, I found myself be-
" neath the ramparts of a vast and ancient
" castle. The lights passing and repass-
" ing in the casements told me its inha-
" bitants had not yet retired to rest. This
" was a golden moment for an adventurous
" spirit; for had not necessity and extreme
" fatigue urged me to entreat admission,
" the genius of romance would have lured
" me to the attempt. Hitherto my talents
" and address had only won on the hearts
" of benevolent ignorance: I was now to
" exert their influence in a higher sphere.
" I unmuffled my harp, and, though it
" was something injured by the wet, yet
" I produced some full vibrations from its
" chords, and accompanied a pathetic pro-
" vincial air with my voice."

The colour deepened in the cheek of Imogen as her interest every moment in-

creased with the baron's detail. Surely, thought she, it was that sweet strain which lured me to the casement of lady Magdelaine's study.

The baron continued: "In a few mi-
"nutes I heard the grating of a loop-hole
"over a postern-gate removed. Thither I
"bent my steps, and struck up a lively
"air. In a few minutes I distinguished
"the murmuring of voices; and, in the
"pause of my strains, a female accent de-
"manded who I was, and what was my
"business? My answer was couched in
"the usual address of a wandering min-
"strel. I became an earnest suppliant for
"admission, and with success. I was
"received in a vast Gothic hall by a crowd
"of domestics of both sexes, who hailed
"my appearance with a riotous gaiety that
"spoke me a long-wished-for guest. While
"I tuned my harp, the loquacious inten-
"dant of the chateau informed me I was
"in the ancient castle of the lady Mag-
"delaine de Montmorell, the most noble,

" puissant, learned, and pious lady in
" France, but who possessed withal no
" very favourable opinion of those who
" gave themselves up to mirth and pastime.
" The apprehensions, however, awakened
" by their lady's aversion to such enjoy-
" ments were soon subdued by my harp's
" lively tones, and some comic romances
" gleaned from the scattered minstrelsy
" of Provence, with a *farandole* and other
" dances, the gay impulsive propensities
" of a French heart, a French foot can
" never resist. Their mistress's displea-
" sure was no longer remembered; in a
" moment all was motion and hilarity
" around me, and my heart throbbed with
" corresponding emotions of pleasure. It
" was in the midst of this gay forgetfulness
" of all restriction that the commandatory
" message of the lady Magdelaine anni-
" hilated our thronging joys, and I was
" shortly after summoned to her presence.
" Although I was not personally known
" to the lady Magdelaine, I was not igno-

" rant of her family, her character, her
" political and religious bigotry. Her
" brother I knew had been one of the
" staunchest adherents to the League, and
" a private animosity as well as a public
" difference of opinion had subsisted be-
" tween him and my father; I was not,
" therefore, totally divested of apprehen-
" sion when I appeared at the door of her
" *palladium*: and while I shunned the dan-
" ger of her fixed and penetrating gaze,
" my incautious glance was rivetted on
" eyes where lurked a greater but a
" sweeter peril; for then I first beheld
" Imogen, like the beautifully embodied
" spirit of Peace hovering o'er the throne
" of Discord. Thy fair arm leaned on the
" back of the sybil's chair, and on that
" fair arm reposed a fairer face, shaded by
" a veil whose dark drapery increased by
" contrast the snowy lustre of thy com-
" plexion, the beamy radiance of thine
" eye. Oh! it was a sweet picture; and
" memory, true to its interesting charms,

" has oft restored it to my eye in all its
" primitive beauty, in all its dangerous
" softness, every feature animated by the
" fire of genius, every tint softened by
" the influence of sensibility, and the
" bright illuminations of mind irradiating
" the countenance of seraph innocence.
" Often, too, has remembrance lingered
" on that after-moment, when thine eye's
" soft glance first mingled with the ardent
" gaze of mine, when my ears received
" those sublime and eloquent sentiments
" which sunk to my soul, and flattered
" me in the fond belief that in thee I had
" at last found the essence of myself. Oh,
" my sweet auditress! a thousand times
" since that moment of heart-thrilling
" emotion, when I have listened to the
" stale and hacknied precepts of dogmatic
" morality, the crude and unimportant
" exhortations of religious bigotry, issu-
" ing from the bold declamatory lips of
" the popular pulpit orator, which neither
" liberalized the mind nor touched the

" heart, how often have I exclaimed, " Why are not all preachers like the " novice of St. Dominick, at once the " example and emblem of the pure and " elevated virtue she teaches? or why is " not that sex, whose lips are imbued " with the spirit of persuasion, sent to us " as the sweet missionaries of piety and " virtue? How irresistible then were the " lures of consummate excellence!

" Although my glowing imagination " had often offered up its homage to the " charms of woman, my heart as yet re- " mained untouched. Had Imogen been " merely beautiful, haply it had remained " so still: had I only beheld her lovely in " her modest silence, as on the night of " my first appearance in the study of lady " Magdelaine, the morning would have " witnessed my departure: but it was that " morning that a happy circumstance " (shall I call it so?) betrayed to me her " mind's superior beauty. The spell of " genius, of virtue, was omnipotent; I

"bowed to the magic of their influence,
"aided by the powerful charm of youth
"and loveliness, of tenderness and sensi-
"bility. There was but one spot for me
"in the creation: that spot was the resi-
"dence of Imogen; and I became a suc-
"cessful suppliant to breathe the same air
"she inhaled, to enjoy a temporary bliss-
"ful existence beneath the eyes of her
"from whom I seemed to receive it. I
"reflected not that it was the son of the
"proud baron de Montargis who lived
"but for the orphan novice of St. Domi-
"nick. No! my idea of love, like every
"other I had formed amidst the embower-
"ing shades, the sweet solitudes of Pro-
"vence, partook of that enthusiasm which
"the world's phlegm calls romance, but
"without which there is no love. Oh!
"hadst thou ever felt the eager throbbings
"of a heart that long had vainly sought
"its kindred heart, the tender lodgings
"of a soul that languished for its heaven-
"assorted mate, thy modest incredulity,

" that now averts thine eye and pales thy
" cheek, would not thus start at that excess
" of passion which arose from the dear con-
" viction of having found in thee my long-
" sought better self, assimilating, yet su-
" perior to all in myself most valued. The
" frail sophisticated daughters of fashion
" shrunk in the scale of comparison with
" Imogen even to the last degree. Their
" vivacity bordering on licentiousness,
" their learning (when possessed) dege-
" nerating to pedantry, their wit to slan-
" der, their blandishment to levity, dis-
" gusted most when most exerted to de-
" light; while Imogen alone realized the
" lovely vision of feminine excellence my
" heart and imagination had made the
" standard of my hopes. Dignity without
" pride, simplicity without folly, nature
" united to intelligence, sensibility to
" gaiety, tenderness to wit, and learning
" to humility, added to beauty without
" vanity, and the graces without affecta-
" tion, were what my ambitious hopes

"long sought, and found at last in thee.
"My lady, look not thus incredulously
"on me; for trust me, I chatter not the
"frothy nothings of a coxcomb school:
"it is a soldier's honest unsophisticated
"heart that pours the treasure of its con-
"fidence into thine. Was not the faith-
"ful homage of that heart attested by the
"incongruous conduct it governed? The
"flame of glory, that had till then burnt
"fiercely there, became extinguished, and
"o'er its dying embers arose love's softer
"fires. Dead to the calls of my country,
"the service I had promised, and still
"owed my king, the voice of passion only
"won my soul's attention. Wrapt in
"love's delusive dream, to gratify the
"vague and indefinite desires of my heart,
"I became a houshold drudge, the instru-
"ment of female whim and female pe-
"dantry in its last stage of dotage and
"folly; and a smile, a glance, from Imo-
"gen was the reward of an age of self-
"denial, of weariness, and disgust. Deep-

" versed in all the insidious sophistry of
" love, my heart perpetually furnished un-
" answerable arguments to the suggestions
" of my prudence : it enumerated those he-
" roes who had subdued their desire of glory
" to gratify the sweeter ambition of van-
" quishing a tender, a sensible heart. Last
" on the list appeared the ever-enamoured
" Henry : Why, when the flame of glory
" burned brightest round him, did he fly
" from victory's loud plaudits in the fields
" of *Coutras*, but to lay the colours he
" had taken at the feet of the beautiful
" countess de Guiche, in whose eyes only
" he sought his immortality? Why did
" he conclude an hasty and imprudent
" truce with his crafty enemy, but in his
" ardent impatience to enter on a more
" endearing treaty with the young and
" lovely de Tignonville ? And why, even
" now, when almost certain success
" lures him to the pursuit of his active
" enemy, does he abandon the promised
" conquest, and at the feet of Gabrielle

" d'Estrées fondly own himself the con-
" quered ? Yes, said I, be thou, immor-
" tal hero, in all, as in thy rank, my great
" superior ; but in love, though thou art
" Passion's warmest child, I will get goal
" for goal with thee."

" My lord, my lord," interrupted Imogen, blushing, distressed, and yet delighted, " you forget that it was an " history of your life, not of your sensa-
" tions, you had entered on ; admitting
" such sensations were ever awakened in
" your heart by an object, who feels her-
" self unworthy, as she is incredulous, of
" the honour assigned her."

" I understand you, lady," said the baron reproachfully ; " the daughter of the
" count de St. Dorval is weary of listening
" to the progressive influence of that pas-
" sion, Imogen of Montmorell did not
" once disdain to acknowledge she had
" inspired. Oh Imogen! do you then
" forget that evening, which in the re-
" cords of my memory holds a distinct

" place from the cold account of time,
" when panting, blushing, in all thy soul-
" dissolving modesty, those eyes, in tender
" languishment, raised their melting glance
" to mine; and when I swore I loved,
" they bade me not despair? when for the
" first and last time, I folded thee to an
" heart, whose every pulse in love's sweet
" sympathy beat true to thine?"

Agitated, overwhelmed with confusion, in an accent half impassioned, half reproachful, she tremulously replied: " No, " my lord, I have not forgot that even- " ing; yet had I learnt the lesson thy " example taught me, I had long, long " since, forgot both it and thee." The warm tear which wounded affection sent to her eye, her pride forbid to stain the indignant blush that burnt on her cheek: it swam a prisoner in its circling orbit. In the ardent gaze with which the baron pursued the fugitive emotions that flitted o'er the countenance of Imogen, lurked a triumph, the suppliant glance of love could not wholly subdue.

"Imogen," he said, taking her hand, "even thy reproach is dear to me, since "it betrays that a lingering interest, whose "existence I scarcely dared to hope, had "survived the intervention of time and "absence. Nor is it the less gracious for "being undeserved: for no pang of con- "science awakens to its tenderly accusing "sound; my conduct has been the result "of necessity, not of volition, my actions "have been foreign to my heart, but my "heart has ever been true to thee—But to "resume—

"I will confess to thee, sweet lady, that "in pursuing the golden vision of my "fond imagination, I scarcely had an ob- "ject or aim in view. To see, to hear "thee, to catch the timid glance of thine "eye, to receive the smile of thy lip, to "pursue the varying blush of thy cheek, "and hang with rapturous delight upon "the hope, the enjoyment, or the recol- "lection of those moments, which love "stole for me, and Imogen blest with her

"presence; such was the boundary of
"my wishes and my thoughts. Life
"at that sweet æra was all a blissful
"dream, with no other alloy to its ima-
"ginary delights, than the fear of being
"awakened excited: but the dream of
"my heart was at last doomed to destruc-
"tion; and when the sweet illusion va-
"nished, I found I was destined to love
"without the hope of ever possessing my
"love's fair object. My father's ancestral
"pride, his hatred of the catholic faith,
"the ambitious views he had formed for
"his only son, were the objects which
"reason, prudence and conviction perpe-
"tually brought to my mind: while love,
"in laughing mischief, conjured
"form of the Novice of St
"and those tormenting spi
"the magic sound of the ex-
"orcist. The hatred
"to confess the
"tiality of
"

"circumstance more powerful in its in-
"fluence than either, that determined me
"to a step my heart and senses still re-
"jected. On the morning of my last
"day's residence at the chateau, the fa-
"ther Anselm entered the apartment of
"lady Magdelaine, where I sat writing,
"and informed her in Italian, of which he
"supposed me ignorant, that the blast of
"the war-horn echoed almost to the por-
"tals of the chateau: for that the royal
"army had invested Epernai, a town not
"two leagues distant; that a report was
"spread of the duke of Parma's death,
"who was the soul of the League; and
"that the king himself had just come
"to the relief of the duke de Biron, to
[redacted]hom he had given the command of his
[redacted] How the emotion this news
"awakened in my heart escaped the pe
"[redacted]of the Friar, can only be
[redacted] by the agitation he was
[redacted]ppily I was
[redacted] king h[redacted]

" himself from the allurements of plea-
" sure, the embrace of love, to share the
" dangers of the lowest of his subjects;
" and the suffrage which his weakness ac-
" corded to my own no longer existed. I
" must fly, said I; the voice of glory, of
" duty, can be no longer neglected. I
" must break the Circe-like spell which
" holds me in delighted bondage; and, to
" secure the future happiness of Imogen,
" must now sacrifice my own. Yes, while
" I resigned the destiny of my love to a
" future day and happier prospects, I de-
" termined that, as soon as my profes-
" sional duties would permit, I would ef-
" fect your escape from the chateau de
" Montmorell, and place you beyond the
" reach of that living death monastic bi-
" gotry was preparing for you, by con-
" signing you to the care of a female
" friend, on whose kindness I knew I had
" an unlimited letter of credit, which gra-
" titude for a trifling service endowed me
" with. A circumstance which took place

" in the morning confirmed my intention ;
" a circumstance which arose from the
" Friar's having possessed himself of a poe-
" tical effusion addressed to the *minstrel*."
The baron paused, and withdrew his eyes from the blushing face of Imogen.

" The perusal of that poem awakened,
" without confirming, hopes, love too
" eagerly embraced. In all the ardour of
" new-born transport, in all the lively ad-
" miration of a genius almost idolized, I
" flew to seek the enchanting poetess.—
" Imogen, when will my heart be weary
" of recurring to that sweet moment,
" when my lips first violated the sacred si-
" lence love even to adoration had till then
" imposed; that moment, when one glance
" from Imogen diffused all the poison of
" a sweet but dangerous hope into my
" heart? Nay, avert not those eyes, that
" then beamed not thus coldly on me; and
" forgive this (to thee) idle repetition :
" for when the heart is in its dotage, it
" loves to pause and loiter over the tender

" recollection of its faded joys ; nor spares
" the patience of its auditor in the reca-
" pitulation of its treasured blisses. In
" the most enrapturing, the richest, sweet-
" est moment of my existence, thou may-
" est remember I was torn from thy pre-
" sence by the jealous fears of the lady
" Magdelaine. The envy and vain sus-
" picion of the friar made me a prisoner,
" ere I could unfold to thee the purposes
" of my heart, with respect to thy future
" fate, or reveal my real rank and character.
" And yet let me say to thee, sweet lady !
" that in all the pride of self-love, per-
" haps too fastidiously organized, my soul
" rejoiced in the certainty, that whatever
" interest I had excited in the inestimable
" heart of genius, virtue, and sensibility,
" I owed that precious interest to myself
" alone, wholly independent of the extrane-
" ous and dazzling advantages of rank and
" fortune. That certainly conveyed a more
" lively throb of rapture to my heart, than
" all that opulence and dignity ever confer-

" red upon the ambitious mind of all-ambi-
" tious man. My feelings, my affection,
" my pride, my reason, revelled even to
" delirium in the transporting conviction ;
" and I almost blessed, while I regretted,
" the interruption which prevented a dis-
" covery that might eventually have de-
" stroyed my boundless confidence.

" Overcome by numbers, after many
" vain struggles, I found myself in a re-
" mote apartment at the west end of the
" chateau, and heard the door of my pri-
" son strongly barred and bolted on the
" outside. As the servile crowd who had
" dragged me thither retired, and when I
" was in some degree recovered from the
" exhausted state my useless and violent
" exertions had thrown me into, I care-
" fully examined the place of my confine-
" ment.

" It was a small and ruinous apartment,
" with one grated window, which hung
" over the Aisne. The prospect it com-
" manded was extensive; the cloudless

" light of that beautiful planet, which had
" a few minutes before attracted our ad-
" miring gaze, shone with splendour on
" the distant spires of Epernai; and the
" watch-fires of the royal camp were dis-
" cernible at certain distances. What a
" prospect to a man, in whose heart the
" flame of glory was just illumined with
" renovated ardour, who within sight of
" his royal commander and brave fellow-
" soldiers, found himself a prisoner to
" those who would probably make a merit
" of delivering him, on bare suspicion, to
" the enemy of his country and his king,
" to gratify their own private pique; and
" thus expose him to danger greater, if
" possible, than that he had already es-
" caped! My blood boiled in my veins;
" my heart beat with an emotion very dif-
" ferent from that which a short time be-
" fore had awakened its palpitation: it
" was not the soft wild thrilling pulse of
" love, but the feverish rapid throb of rage,
" disappointment, shame, and indignation.

"With an effort of Herculean strength,
"borrowed from the energizing passions
"of the existing moment, I wrenched one
"of the bars from its decayed foundation;
"and a great part of the framework giv-
"ing way, I found little difficulty in mak-
"ing a breach sufficiently wide to escape
"by. A height of twenty feet scarcely
"presented an obstacle to a spirit wound
"up to desperation; and without the he-
"sitation of a moment, I plunged into the
"waves beneath, which seemed to swell
"their moon-light bosoms to receive me:
"but stunned by my headlong fall, I was
"borne unresisting for a considerable way
"down the stream; then recovering
"strength and presence of mind, I swam
"to the opposite shore, which brought me
"within a league of the camp, which at
"day-break I reached, at the moment
"that the king at the head of his troops
"was engaged with a numerous squadron
"the enemy were attempting to throw
"into the town; the defeat of which by

" the royalists prevented the siege being
" raised. I arrived in the heat of despe-
" rate action, and, seizing the arms of a
" wounded soldier, in the confusion of the
" engagement got so near the king, as to
" received in my breast a ball aimed at his;
" for the scarlet cloak and snowy plumage
" always rendered him an obvious mark.
" Bathed in blood, which stained the wet
" drapery of my drenched habit, I fell life-
" less at my sovereign's feet. The king
" himself, though believing me to be but
" a private soldier, raised me in his arms;
" and was consigning me, with the flattering
" epithet of his saviour, to an officer who
" stood near him; when raising my fast
" closing eyes I perceived that officer was
" my father! I sunk in his embrace with-
" out life or motion.

" Awakened from my trance by the
" anguish the dressing of my wounds oc-
" casioned, I found myself in the royal
" tent, lying on a couch, surrounded by
" surgeons, and supported by my father's

" arms. I could scarcely return his warm
" and tender embrace, while tears that
" flowed from his affectionate and paternal
" heart fell on my face, and revived my
" sinking spirits. When I had swallowed
" some cordials, and my wounds were
" bound up, I attempted to speak, but
" the surgeons imposed silence. I found
" I was too weak to allow them to extract
" the ball, without endangering my life,
" which lay almost within a hair's breadth
" of a vital part. I read the mortality of
" my wound in the countenance of all
" who surrounded me; in the enanguished,
" the heart-breaking looks of my father,
" I alone traced some gleam of hope; for
" when death hovers over the couch of
" the child, the parent's heart is the last
" to deny her consolatory illusions.

" The ball was at last extracted, and
" for three days my life was despaired of.
" On the evening of the fourth, the gan-
" grene irritation of the wound subsided,
" though it was still painful, even to mad-

" ness; and for the first time the surgeons
" pronounced me out of imminent danger;
" but it was not till the expiration of the
" two succeeding days, I was suffered to
" satisfy the tender solicitude, the anxious
" curiosity of my father. I related to him
" in a few words my adventures; and
" when I wished to be most concise was
" most tedious: over my admission at the
" chateau I loitered with imprudent fond-
" ness, and confessed unconsciously what
" I had determined to conceal, that I had
" remained there more than a week. My
" father, fixing a look of penetration on
" my face, asked me my inducement to
" remain beneath the roof of one, whose
" family had long been at professed va-
" riance with our own, who was bigotted
" in her attachment to the League, and
" her hatred to the royalists, and whose
" private character and person were as
" disgustful, as her public principles were
" odious; at a period too, when my own
" security, duty, and the anxiety of a

" father called loudly on me not to waste a
" moment in delay? To these natural
" enquiries I returned an hesitating,
" vague, and equivocal answer; and yet
" my father appeared satisfied. He then
" informed me, that the king was deeply
" impressed with a sense of what he was
" pleased to term my gallant conduct,
" though he somewhat blamed the impru-
" dence which had led me into the heart
" of the enemy's camp; that he had con-
" ferred on me the title of baron de Mon-
" targis, and given my father letters patent
" for the dukedom of Beauvilliers.

" 'To crown all,' said my father, 'he
" has laid out for you the most honour-
" able alliance in France, by uniting you
" to the richest protestant heiress in it,
" the daughter of the duke de V——.
" The death of the duke de Parma, and
" the time taken up by the League in ap-
" pointing a successor, gives his majesty
" time to breathe; and he has fixed on
" Mantes as his residence, as a place well

" calculated by its situation to frustrate
" the machinations of his enemies. Thi-
" ther we will attend him, and he has done
" you the honour to appoint you to a
" situation immediately about his person.'

" While I lay overwhelmed and motion-
" less by this information, which seemed
" as grateful to my father's heart as it was
" wounding to mine, the king himself
" entered, attended only by the baron de
" Rosni, with all that fascinating conde-
" scension which so eminently distin-
" guishes the most illustrious of monarchs,
" the most amiable of men. He embraced
" me with the affectionate warmth of a
" father, inquired with tender solicitude
" into the state of my health, flatteringly
" declared he owed his life to what he
" was pleased to term my gallant inter-
" ference, and then repeated all my father
" had already said. ' You know my cha-
" racter,' added the king, ' sanguine even
" in trifles; but when the interest of my
" friends is concerned, impatient as a

" froward child. I am more shocked " by the delay your illness occasions than " you can be yourself: yet I am not alto- " gether so disinterested in your recovery " as you may suppose; for in promoting " your interest I shall not wholly neglect " my own.'

" I with difficulty, but with energy, " assured the king I would willingly de- " vote my life to his service; and that " could I believe I should be instrumental " in promoting his happiness or interest, I " should consider it as too cheaply pur- " chased with my own. 'Ventre Saint " Gris!' said his majesty, smiling at the " enthusiasm of my manner, heightened " by the raging fire of a fever that was " kindling in my veins. 'Ventre Saint " Gris! I do believe it. Kings must " share the lot of human nature, and " learn to suffer, were it only to know its " choicest blessing—to be beloved. Ad- " versity alone is the touchstone of friend- " ship. He who is always prosperous

" sees the world but on one side. It was " in the sharpest vicissitudes of fortune, " when I was a king without a kingdom, " a general without an army, a husband " without a wife; when I was persecuted, " pursued, oppressed, by a power I vainly " opposed, that I found in the mine of " friendship what was almost an equivalent " for all Catherine de Medicis would have " deprived me of.' The king laid his " hand on the shoulder of the baron de " Rosni, and looking in his face with an " affectionate smile, added: 'I shall never " quarrel with adversity, since it has given " me so faithful a friend as de Rosni.' A " hectic of pleasure, of pride, passed across " the baron de Rosni's face; he bowed low " and said: ' Sire, it is a principle with " your majesty to over-rate the services of " others in proportion as you undervalue " those illustrious virtues which more than " your rank exact them.'

" The king then adverted to those mea- " sures requisite to be taken for the se-

" curity of his crown. Many of the no-
" bility still opposed his endeavours; and
" among those of whose fealty he was du-
" bious was the duke de V——. 'I have
" proposed, to him,' said the king, 'a union
" between his daughter and the son of
" one of the most stedfast of my adhe-
" rents. When mademoiselle de V——
" is the wife of the baron de Montargis,
" I shall no longer fear for the fealty of
" her father. But,' he kindly added, ob-
" serving the paleness that suddenly over-
" spread my face, 'I fear we have ex-
" hausted and wearied our invalid.' I at-
" tempted to speak, but his majesty, gaily
" putting his hand on my lips, said:
" 'Nay, reserve your eloquence for made-
" moiselle de V——; meantime I shall
" officiate as love's herald, and hold a
" parley for you, until you are able to ad-
" dress your liege lady *in propria persona*.
" She attends our little court at Mantes,
" whither I go to-morrow.' The king
" then bade me farewell, and retired, fol-

" lowed by de Rosni and my father. The " attendants had been previously dis- " missed when his majesty's intention of " visiting me had been announced, and I " happily found myself alone at a moment " when I was so little able to support the " presence of any human being. When " the first confused ideas of my agonized " mind subsided, I briefly enumerated " those arguments which reason brought " forward in favour of an union my heart, " even though it had been free, would " have rejected. It was an object to " which my father's wish for my aggran- " dizement had long pointed, and which " now attained, it would be impossible to " force him to relinquish. It was not only " the *will* of my sovereign, but his *in-* " *terest*; and to be ranked among the " number of those noble friends who had " served him, and shared his friendship, " his esteem, his gratitude; to be added " to that honourable and illustrious list of " loyal patriots who so willingly sacrificed

"every private consideration to restore "peace to their country, to their king his "just rights; to find my name enrolled "with those of the brave Crillon, the ge- "nerous La Noue, the heroic Biron, the "prudent, wise, and faithful de Rosni! "Yes, said I, starting from my couch, "I will instantly follow the king, acknow- "ledge his goodness, accompany him to "Mantes, and throw myself at the feet of "mademoiselle de V——. At that mo- "ment a paper that lay on the ground "caught my eye. I looked on it for a "moment: it contained a drawing of Imo- "gen in the habit of a novice of St. Do- "minick, and had been done by Theo- "dore, the page of Montmorell, from "whom I had purchased it with my harp.

"This precious shadow had ne'er left "a bosom where the original reigned om- "nipotent. From the moment it was "mine I had enclosed it, with a few beads "dropped from the novice's rosary, and "the little poem addressed to the minstrel,

" in the minstrel gorget, which, like a " precious reliquary, I had fastened round " my neck, and by which they had escaped " the waters of the Aisne. Oh, the ta- " lismanic power of this little picture! I " snatched it up, and covered it with " kisses. My father, my king, my bride, " were all forgotten: Imogen reigned " alone sovereign of my thoughts! At " that instant I heard some one approach, " and attempted to hide my treasure in its " little depositary, when to my amaze- " ment I found it was gone: it had been " taken from my bosom.

" While I was searching my couch my " father entered. Without speaking, he " eagerly looked round the room, and " seemed as eagerly employed in searching " for something lost as myself; when ob- " serving the picture in my hand, he started. " Imogen, spare me the repetition of what " followed. Suffice it to say, that my fa- " ther had possessed himself of the gorget, " and soon became master of the secret

" of my heart. On the evening of that
" day I was seized with a raging delirious
" fever: it ha long brooded in my veins:
" the wet cloaths I had worn for so long
" a time after my passage across the
" Aisne, the violent heat which had suc-
" ceeded, together with the irritation of
" my wounds, and the perturbation of my
" mind and passions, reduced me to that
" state which not only threatened my life,
" but, what is so much more dreadful even
" to think of, my reason. When the
" effects of my disorder on my corporeal
" frame were in some degree subsided,
" my distracted father brought me in a
" litter to Paris, where, under the care of
" two eminent physicians, I slowly reco-
" vered my senses and my health. The
" first moment of returning reason was
" that in which I awaked from a deep
" sleep. I drew back the curtain of my
" bed, and to my amazement beheld a
" lady richly habited seated by my side.
" She was talking in a low voice to my

"father, when turning round her head, "her eye met mine. I uttered an excla- "mation of surprize, and sunk on my "pillow. This lady was not a stranger "to me."

The baron started as if this confes- sion had escaped him, and coloured deeply. Imogen's penetrating eye was fixed on his countenance. That blush was a kindred effusion of one which had stained the baron's cheek when he had mentioned the mystery of his emancipation from the prison of N——; and, by the association of ideas this recollection awakened, Imo- gen believed this was the person to whom he owed his deliverance.

The baron continued: "My father, ob- "serving the intelligence of my looks, "embraced me tenderly, and with tears "exclaimed: 'My son! my beloved son! "you are again restond to me! Come, "madam,' said he, taking the lady by the "hand, 'share in the happiness which it "is yet reserved for you to confirm.' "Imogen, this lady was——"

"Your deliverer from the prison of "N——."

The baron hesitated. "You have in- "deed guessed right," said he, after a pause and in some confusion; "and still "more, this generous deliverer was—ma- "demoiselle de V——!"

A death-like paleness overspread the countenance of Imogen. She turned aside her head to conceal her emotion. The baron hung down his, and a long silence ensued. Then in a hurried accent he added: "But not to intrude longer on your "patience, mademoiselle de V—— was "an only child, whose will had become "sovereign from the fatal fondness of her "parents, and whose naturally strong pas- "sions had been nurtured by boundless "indulgence. She had been brought up "in solitude at her father's cheateau in "Provence. The female attendant most "in her confidence had been a servant of "my mother's, and my nurse. She had "filled the mind of her youthful and

"credulous mistress with such reports of "the perfections of the being she had "fostered at her bosom, that the young "romantic imagination of mademoiselle "de V—— became enamoured of a phan-"tom of ideal excellence. She had seen "me at Paris on my return from Eng-"land; but our parents, then at variance, "prevented an intimacy taking place. We "met at court and in public. She was "then, though not beautiful, that is, not "*femininely* lovely, not all the wish in wo-"man, the object of fashionable admira-"tion. I looked at her with curiosity, "and she probably construed my observ-"ation into a warmer sentiment. I left "Paris, and did not again behold her "until she effected my deliverance at "N——. She was then on a visit there "with her maternal uncle, the governor "of the town. Her humanity became "interested for me; her spirit was ad-"venturous, her mind romantic, and her "provençal servant, my old attendant,

"perpetually wept my fate in her pre-
"sence. The governor resided in the
"citadel, whose walls also enclosed the
"prison where state criminals were con-
"fined. The tower in which I was lodged
"hung over a terrace, where, induced by
"the view it commanded, madame de
"V——, attended by her confidant, used
"sometimes to walk. It was in the still-
"ness of a fine moonlight evening that
"the tones of my harp first caught her ear,
"and from that moment she determined
"on my delivery, which she afterwards so
"generously effected."

Here the baron again paused. Imogen's emotion continued to increase beyond every effort to subdue or conceal it; while the baron, abruptly starting from a profound reverie, took up the thread of his story in an unconnected manner and in a rapid tone.

"I recovered, and was just able to go out,
"when the king arrived at Paris. The dis-
"covery of many factions in the very heart

" of his army, factions which even aimed at
" his life; the offer of the crown of France
" by the duke de Mayenne to the king of
" Spain; together with the horror of perpe-
" tuating a civil and religious war in the
" heart of his country, induced the king to
" embrace the catholic religion; and even
" my father and the baron de Rosni, the
" staunchest hugonots in the kingdom,
" urged him to it most strenuously, with
" all the most respectable of the nobility of
" France. My father and myself attend-
" ed his majesty to the church of St. Denis,
" where, surrounded by a multitude, who
" crowded with idolatrous fondness to be-
" hold a monarch who united in his per-
" son the three races of their kings, he
" made his abjuration in form.

" Multitudes of voices cried, 'Long
" live the king;' and every joyous counte-
" nance ratified the sincerity of the prayer.*

* "A pleasant adventure happened me at church, an *old* woman of eighty caught me by the arm and

"The Parisians, who had hitherto sided
" with the League, weary of the horrors
" of rebellion, and convinced that that fac-
" tion, far from having the good of their
" country at heart, were active only to pro-
" mote their own private interests, called
" loudly for peace, and obliged the duke
" de Mayenne to supplicate the king to
" grant a truce for three months, which
" he willingly did; and shortly after, the
" royal hero was received at Paris with
" such acclamations of rapture, that he
" exclaimed with enthusiastic transport,
" 'They are wild to see a king!' A ge-
" neral pardon was granted to all who had
" taken up arms; and the greatest order,
" subordination, and propriety was pre-
" served among the army of the trium-
" phant royalists, while the king obtained

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kissed me: I was not the first to laugh at the circumstance. To-morrow you shall sweeten my lip." Vide *Recueil des Lettres de Henri le Grand à Madl. d'Estrées.*

" a more boundless empire over the hearts
" of his subjects than royalty alone could
" confer. The vivacity of his temper, the
" brilliancy of his repartees, the conde-
" scension of his manners, rendered him
" the idol of a people to whom such ac-
" complishments bear a magnetic attrac-
" tion. All the principal provinces be-
" trayed an impatience to submit them-
" selves to their amiable conqueror; the
" Spaniards, seeing that in the centre
" of the kingdom all was lost to them, re-
" solved to impede the torrent by some
" unexpected stroke, and laid siege to
" Aix-la-Chapelle. The king did not he-
" sitate a moment to quit his domestic con-
" cerns, and instantly left Paris with his
" troops, and some of his principal nobi-
" lity, to prevent the reduction of the
" town. I attended him at the head of
" my regiment, as did my father, but un-
" fortunately, before we arrived, the gar-
" rison had surrendered to the count de
" Mansfield, the Spanish general.

" Without giving breathing time to his " troops, the king, by way of reprisal, in- " stantly invested Laon; which by the " defeat of the convoy sent to succour it " must soon submit to his majesty, al- " though the garrison still holds out with " an obstinate intrepidity that deserves suc- " cess, though it is impossible it can com- " mand it.

" The extreme agitation of public af- " fairs, and the anxiety with which every " one has entered into the interest of the " king, has for the present suspended all " private considerations in the hearts of " his adherents. My father, on the com- " mencement of the siege, was obliged to " leave the camp for the province he go- " verned; and the king's favour conferred " on his son that high military command " which he had been obliged to relinquish. " To this undeserved honour was added the " flattering distinction of being appointed " one of the hundred, who accompanied " the duke de Biron in his late hazardous

" and successful enterprize. Oh! in this
" instance, shall I not become a fatalist in
" sentiment, and believe it was a happy
" destiny that governed an event which
" threw into my possession such a *prize*,
" as required more heroism in Scipio to
" resign than to effect the victory which
" made it his. When, in the horrid tu-
" mult of the battle, my eyes, dazzled by
" the flying or contending multitude,
" shocked by the prospect of protracted
" carnage and human butchery, recoiling
" from the horrors which blasted their
" glance, turned towards that spot where
" an intrepid youthful champion, with more
" than mortal courage, defended a pros-
" trate friend; Oh! how little did I think
" that that champion was the daughter of
" the count St. Dorval; that that heroic
" daughter was the timid gentle Imogen!
" yet even then my heart's fond instinct
" led me towards the spot your presence
" sanctified; but the fury of pursuit tore
" me from thee, and I could only charge

"two of my soldiers in thy favour. The "hurry, the confusion, which ever succeeds a fierce engagement, prevented "me enquiring for a prisoner who had excited no common interest, and whom I "looked on as my own; for, dreadful to "think! it was my interference that saved "the most invaluable of lives, and changed "a cruel death into, I trust, a mild captivity.

"And now," added the baron with a faint smile, "I will at least grant a truce "to the patience and flattering attention "with which you have honoured a soldier's "plain unvarnished tale, that lost its interest to the reciter when you ceased to "be its theme." The baron paused, while the name of mademoiselle de V—— hovered on the lip of Imogen, her eye seemed to demand why he had turned the most interesting crisis of his detail into the stream of public affairs, and left his situation with respect to mademoiselle de V——unascertained, to speak of the political state

of France. The baron read the interrogation in the expressive glance which was raised to his face, and added in a tone of hesitation, "but though, my fair auditress, "I have granted a truce to your patience, "I cannot wholly relinquish my claims to "it, and if I dared to believe, to hope, "that at a future period"—"My lord," repeated Imogen in a tone of mortification, and, rising from her seat, then in a firmer voice added, "I at least can have no fur- "ther claims on your candour. Moments "like these, to a mind wearied by anxiety, "are precious. Will you not suffer me "to hope you will use them in my favour, "by effecting my immediate restoration "to my suffering father?"

The baron's colour changed as she spoke; he paced the tent with rapid steps, while the emotions of his countenance betrayed those internal struggles which agitated a mind divided between contending passions. As Imogen's timid eye pursued the motion of the youthful warrior's

graceful form, or marked the pensive gloom that hung upon his manly brow, and dimmed the lustre of his shining eyes, a profound sigh escaped her lips, in which her father's fate could claim no share. She again seated herself, and supported her drooping head on the hand that concealed her face. That tender sigh acted like a spell on the feelings of the baron; he advanced, and respectfully taking her hand, fixed his eyes, full of melancholy but reproachful expression, on her half-averted face, and exclaimed: "An immediate resto-
"ration! and are you then, oh Imogen!
"so impatient to leave one who——"

"My lord," interrupted Imogen, disengaging her hand, and in evident perturbation, "impatience is *too cold* a word."

"Well, madam," said the baron, with an air of mortification mingled with an hauteur that perhaps formed the predominant expression of his countenance and manner, "we will not dispute about the
"*word*, when the *sentiment* is so obvious.

"Reluctant as the count de St. Dorval "may be to owe the recovery of his daugh- "ter to a *Montargis*, every nerve shall be "strained to effect that eagerly wished-for "immediate restoration. I go, lady," continued he as he put on his helmet and girded on his sword, "to the tent of his majesty, "to inform him of the rich spoil the for- "tune of war has graced his arms withal, "and to learn the fate of his lovely cap- "tive." The baron retired, and Imogen almost articulately exclaimed, "Alas! and "am I so willingly obeyed?"

Alone and unobserved, the long repressed emotions which had struggled in the bosom of the prisoner, rushed over her heart with the overwhelming influence of a torrent at the moment when it first bursts the barrier that should impede its headlong force. She wept; but each tear of regret could claim a kindred smile of joy: she sighed; but each sigh of apprehension was but prelusive of a thrill of hope. Now his inviolable engagements to the duke de V——

floated on her pensive memory; and now delighted recollection dwelt on those impassionate declarations, those ardent looks, those warm professions and tender sighs, which so eloquently declared that in this alliance of policy and parental ambition the heart had no share, and that the captive daughter of the count de St. Dorval still maintained the empire won by the novice of St. Dominick; "and yet," thought Imogen, "what obscurity, what mystery, "hovered over the conclusion of his narra-"tive; and though he touched with so much "modest carelessness over the partiality of "mademoiselle de V——, how obviously "did those slight but marking traits of her "character and conduct evince the ten-"derness, the fidelity, the heroism of her "romantic passion? 'Enamoured of a "phantom of ideal excellence.' Oh no! "her love was founded in nature, in senti-"ment, in reason; it was the homage of "the heart to virtue, in virtue's noblest "form; it was a lively, a profound con-

"sciousness of the inestimable worth of "goodness united to genius, taste, and "knowledge; it was a love so sanctioned, "that to have felt it was almost to par-"take of the excellence which gave it "birth." It was thus the heart of Imogen borrowed a suffrage for its own weakness, by excusing that of another, and attributing to mademoiselle de V—— all she herself had experienced.

Then reverting again to her rival, she continued: "And it was reserved for thee, "oh happy and amiable woman! to pro-"tect and save the idol of your affections; "the saviour of his forfeit life, his libe-"rator from captivity, his tender atten-"dant in sickness: but it rests in the "generous and grateful heart of Montargis "to reward thee for these acts of love." The sense of her own empire over that heart faded into despondency at this conviction, the sophistry of her fears had adduced; and she beheld the baron de Montargis, the happy husband of the en-

viable de V——; "while I," she continued, "still wandering hopelessly on in "love's dreary pilgrimage, faithful though "afflicted, constant though deceived, "shall waste the spirit of youth in chill "despondency, then die without the "hope of surviving my existence in "the memory of him, for whom alone "I lived." It is the peculiar property of delicate and refined minds, united to lively and ardent imaginations, to enjoy more bliss from fancied happiness than human reality can confer; and to suffer more from ideal woes than human calamities can impose. The sufferings of Imogen were of the heart and imagination, and they were insupportable. Abandoning herself to the influence of her emotion, she folded her arms on the table, and reposing her head on them wept the fate her own fancy had conjured up. At that moment the baron entered; he started as he observed her attitude and agitation. The pride of Imogen recoiled from the discovery

of her weakness, and she strove to disguise it beneath an affected indifference and haughtiness of manner. She dried her eyes, and arose with an air of graceful dignity. The baron taking her hand, looked with tender anxiety on her face, and with a faint and affectionate voice exclaimed: "In tears, Imogen!" "A tear, I believe, "my lord," said Imogen, with a forced smile, "is no unusual guest in the eye of "a captive." "And do *you* feel yourself a "captive, lady?" reproachfully demanded the baron. "I am not insensible to your "goodness," said Imogen with assumed firmness, "but I *feel* I am a *child* divided "from a suffering father, who at this mo- "ment may require all a child's solicitude "and care." At her father's name the full heart of Imogen again sent tears to her eyes.

"Imogen," said the baron, relinquishing her hand, and in great perturbation, "do not make me *hate thy virtues*; do not "force me to believe that a new-formed

"affection for a being whose very exis-
"tence but a few days back was unknown
"to thee, supersedes every other senti-
"ment, every other feeling in your bosom.
"Let a friendship once so candidly avow-
"ed, so solemnly pledged, a compassion
"once so freely granted, still maintain
"*some* influence in that all filial heart.
"Once, oh Imogen, you agreed with me
"that collateral ties were not all sufficient
"to fill up the heart's aching void."

To this Imogen made no reply; her harassed spirits were unable to resist the force of her feelings, and she only, and in a faint voice, demanded if his embassy to the king had been crowned with success? The baron threw himself into a chair beside her, and replied: "As I suspected,
"my application for this evening was too
"late. The king has been labouring all
"day in the trenches like a common sol-
"dier, in order to encourage and animate
"his men, who look up to him equally for
"example and reward. The baron de

"Rosni has at last prevailed on him to "retire to rest; and after two nights spent "in watching and anxiety, he has fallen "into a profound sleep, and for this night "it would be impossible to obtain an au- "dience. I regret the circumstance on "your account, although it could avail "little more than soothing your impa- "tience; for the evening is far advanced, "and until to-morrow nothing could be "done." Imogen bowed her head, and answered only with a sigh of very equivocal birth. She was not glad to be detained from her father, but she was not sorry to enjoy a little longer the society of one, from whom perhaps she was about for ever to be severed.

The baron, gazing on the heaviness of her fine eyes and the paleness of her cheeks, said with tender solicitude, as he arose, "Let thy heart for this night rest in "peace; for thy harassed nature demands "repose; the heaviness of fatigue beyond "thy strength to bear, hangs upon thy

" brow, and fades the roses on thy cheek.
" Within the limits of this tent, unmeet
" indeed for such a guest, safety shall
" shield thee, and preserve this spot sacred
" to thee from the violation of every in-
" truder. My station lies within view of
" this *honoured* tent, and I shall guard
" my illustrious prisoner with no small cir-
" cumspection."

Then bowing on her hand, and gracefully paying the salutation of the night, he retired. He had scarcely left her, when the two females who had attended her in the morning, presented themselves; and having brought in tapers, and arranged a couch in the inward division of the tent, they offered their services to Imogen to assist her in undressing, which she thankfully declined, and was again left to herself. The first wild tumult of her thoughts had subsided into a train of more calm consideration, and the extreme fatigue of mind and spirits which she had undergone, soon lulled the irri-

tation of her feelings, and overpowered the influence of her emotions. The first night watch had not relinquished his station at the entrance of the tent, when the sufferings of the past, the anxieties of the future, and the reflections of the present, were buried in the soft oblivion of profound repose.

CHAP. XVII.

L'art devin, de peindre, l'esprit, a l'esprit.

J. J. ROUSSEAU.

The high communion of superior minds.

AKENSIDE.

THE sun rode high in the horizon before Imogen left a couch over which the spirit of repose seemed to shed its choicest gifts; calm and undisturbed had been her sleep, and fancy's fairest spell conjured up the fairest visions of joy to the dream of her rest; the cares, the anxieties, the turbulent emotios of the preceding day were lulled into forgetfulness in the grateful sensation of renovated strength and recruited spirits, ealth blushed on her cheek and sparkled her eye, and the tone of her mind and elings was well calculated to banish de- tion, convert languor into vivacity, and

open the soul to the visitation of hope, of joy, of love.

Fresh from the duties of her simple toilet, she entered the outer apartment, where an elegant breakfast was spread that seemed to come "with a wish, and with a "wish retired." The drapery of the tent drawn aside to admit the fragrance of the morning air, discovered to the eye the splendid spectacle of the whole army drawn out on an extensive plain, while a number of fine military bands filled the air with strains of martial music, the unclouded sun poured a flood of radiance o'er the animated scene, and the arms of the soldiers brilliantly reflected back the beams which played on their points.

High above the innumerable military commanders which strewed the plain, attired in all the "dread magnificence" of war, the ponderous casque, shining faulchion, invulnerable breast-plate, and pliant cuirasses, the graceful form of the colonel of the king's life-guards, the baron de Mon-

targis, towered in lofty eminence, and the round full tones of his deep and mellow voice distinctly vibrated amidst the wild variety of sound that assailed the ear of his prisoner; while her fond and searching glance soon discovered him amidst the gaudy multitude, the hero of an army of heroes: even "the lion port" of majesty, though surrounded by all the insignia of royal rank, passed on unheeded. Her eye, the obedient organ of her soul, took in no object save that which governed its every feeling; and her ear, the faithful passage to her heart, received no sound but that which alone and ever awakened its liveliest thrill of bliss. Never, indeed, was a form more calculated to fascinate the imagination of genius, and lend to poetry and painting the finest model of youthful heroism personified, than that of the baron de Montargis in his military habit, which, splendid, graceful, and characteristic, was admirably adapted to the majesty of mien, the dignity of air, and that animated ex-

pression of countenance and Roman outline of features, which eminently distinguished his person, and gave him to the enamoured eye, the fervid and glowing fancy, of Imogen as a being of a higher sphere,

"On whom each god had set his seal,
"To give the world assurance of a man."

When the troops dispersed, and she beheld the baron struggling through the crowd to approach her tent, his plumy crest waving in the breeze above the inferior multitude that surrounded him, her heart beat with a velocity that would have mocked the calculation of medical skill to ascertain; pleasure swam in her eye, blushed on her cheek, and shed its bright illumination over every feature of her animated face, to which the rapturous irritation of her feelings gave a marked and sweet expression.

With a rosy confusion of manner, and a smile playful though artless, she advanced

to meet her amiable conqueror. He pressed the hand held out to him to his lips, and gazed in silent delight on the insinuating *naïveté* of her air and the freshness of her beauty's renovated bloom.

"Certainly," said he, as he seated himself by her, "you have been on such an "embassy as Psyche was invested with by "Venus when she received from Proser-"pine a casket of blushes, blooms, and "graces, enchanting looks and sovereign "smiles; but that you have betrayed your "trust, and reserved for yourself those "treasures intended for the deity whom "you resemble."

"What, my lord," said Imogen gaily, and contemplating his warlike appearance, "a soldier and a courtier! gallant in the "chamber as the field, with a device on "your shield like that of Alcibiades, a "cupid playing with thunderbolts."

"But with this difference," said the baron emphatically, "that the treacherous "urchin has turned his arms against my-

" self, instead of pointing them at my " foes; and yet he knows the moderation " of my desires, and that the rich plunder " of one inestimable heart is all the spoil " my utmost ambition pants to possess."

The baron fixed a smiling but impassioned glance on Imogen's face, who, in blushing confusion, and sensible of the delicacy of her situation, which the weakness of her heart rendered doubly obvious, endeavoured to give an indifferent turn to the conversation, and spoke of the pleasure she had received from the late splendid spectacle she had witnessed.

" Yes," said the baron, " the profession " of a soldier wears a very attractive aspect " to those who only behold it in its holi- " day garb, in all its splendid panoply, " divested of its vicissitudes, its horrors, " and its sufferings. I remember, when " a boy, being present, for the first time, " at a review held by Henry the Third at " Fontainbleau. My senses, my imagi- " nation, were captivated, dazzled; mili-

"tary enthusiasm instantly plumed her
"rapid wing, and wandered through such
"scenes of bright illusion, performed such
"feats of supernatural courage and god-
"like heroism as romance loves to design
"and fancy to colour with her brightest
"tints. I burnt my Demosthenes for be-
"ing less eminent in the field than the
"rostrum, and abandoned Horace as a
"coward, to be destroyed by moths and
"must: while the Achilles of Homer and
"the Eneas of Virgil, with a few *preux*
"*chevaliers* of modern date, became my
"study and my models. But alas! a few
"years military experience faded the
"glowing tints my imagination had shed
"over the picture. I saw that the laurels
"which fame flung over the path of vic-
"tory did but conceal his footsteps' bloody
"track, and that the heart of humanity,
"of reason, groaned in anguish over those
"deeds which gave immortality to the
"name of the hero. I saw the ambition
"of a few, the scourge of millions; and

"I beheld the warrior in his splendid "career overturning the rights, the liber- "ties, and happiness of mankind, and "obtaining a deathless name for having "desolated and laid waste the fairest trea- "sures in the moral and natural world."

"But I am sure," said Imogen, delight- ed with such sentiments from the lips of one who was yet in the heyday of valour- ous enthusiasm; "I am sure that even on "the list of conquest there are many "names to be found who tempered mag- "nanimity with moderation and courage "with humanity."

"I hope and believe there are," said the baron; "but partial instances are not an "overbalance for the effects of a general "and radical evil."

"It is not every one," said Imogen with a smile, "who has the courage to "reveal and acknowledge the faults of "his mistress."

"War is not my mistress," said the

baron, "but my affianced bride, from "whom I cannot in honour retreat, though "inclination be as sharp as it will."

The strong allusion which this carelessly-uttered figure bore to the real state of the baron's more intimate engagements struck with the force of electricity not only on his own apprehension but on that of Imogen. Both changed colour under the influence of kindred emotion, and both were for a moment confused and silent. The baron, recovering his presence of mind, at last gaily exclaimed: "But a "truce with war and all its horrors at a "moment when nothing but peace and "joy should be the subjects of disquisi-"tion: it is time for me to ask my lovely "guest if the soldier's rough couch and "the noisy bustle of a camp allowed her "that repose her weariness demanded?"

"Yes, my lord," said Imogen, gladly catching his gaiety, "such profound re-"pose as might rival Epimenides's sleep "of half a century."

"Then perhaps," said he, "you also "possess the skill of Epimenides in ex- "plaining dreams; and were I to discover "those which hovered in my fancy while "I snatched a transient sleep on my post "last night—but perhaps 'twere as well "to conceal them. The dreams of the "heart are often fatal to its peace."

Imogen involuntarily echoed back the half-checked sigh that issued from the baron's lips; then eagerly asked if he had obtained an audience of the king?

"No," he replied; "I have only be- "held his majesty in the field, where he "has been reviewing his forces since the "morning dawn: but," said he rising, "if you desire it I will instantly endea- "vour to see him."

"I entreat it," said Imogen earnestly; and the baron, though with an air of reluctance, withdrew to obey her commands.

As he left the tent, part of the curtain that skreened its entrance remained undrawn, and admitted the dazzling beams of

the sun, which played on the polished surface of a small cabinet that filled a corner of the tent. She approached to admire its curious workmanship, when accidentally laying her hand on one of the pannels it flew open, and she found it was a little portable library filled with books all in duodecimo size. This was a pleasing surprise: it was like meeting a circle of friends in a strange land. She had looked with eager curiosity and delight into above twenty volumes before the baron returned; yet so short was his absence, that she started to find him at her side before she thought he had reached the royal tent.

"I have again to regret," said he, "the "ill-success of my embassy," while the triumphant smile that played on his lip, might well bring the sincerity of that regret into question. "A cessation of arms "agreed on between the besiegers and "the besieged," continued he, "has given

" the king a holiday, and he has left the
" camp above an hour back, attended by
" some of his principal officers; and
" though the impatient anxiety may re-
" gret the event, the refined delicacy of
" your sentiments will approve its cause,
" when I inform you that this amiable
" monarch, more to be loved as a man
" than even revered as a hero, is gone to
" visit a small house in the Forest of Fo-
" lambray, where when a boy he had been
" regaled with fruit and new milk, and
" he now promises himself a sweet though
" melancholy satisfaction, known only to
" superior minds, in visiting those scenes
" so familiar to him in the happy dawn of
" existence, and endeared to his heart by
" the fond recollection of many pleasant
" boyish incidents and youthful sports, ill
" exchanged for the busy cares and more
" important trifles of riper but less feli-
" citous years."

"Oh!" said Imogen, "I can indeed "forgive the cause, though the effects are "so destructive to my present wishes. "How natural to court even the returning "shadow of those sweet and lively emo- "tions which usher in every incident in "the first sunny æra of life, when all is new "and grateful to the unsated senses, and "the unpractised feelings are tremblingly "alive to every sweet impression. Re- "strained and limited as were the plea- "sures of my childhood, yet nature, rich "in her own resources, shed many a guile- "less joy on my heart, which even now "throbs with the recollection of its infan- "tine delights, and experiences in each "departed day the death of sweet sensa- "tion, which can never, never return."

"But which," said the baron, "may be "succeeded by a sweeter. Oh, Imogen! "the pleasures of childhood are but nega- "tive; 'tis insensibility, not enjoyment; "the fancy revels, but the heart lies still;

"the senses are amused, but the senti-
"ment is yet dormant; and the profound
"source of bliss, where nature sums up
"all her joys in one, is still reserved for
"life's maturer æra, when the powers of
"the soul, the imagination, and the heart,
"are all awakened into rapturous exist-
"ence."

The baron took Imogen's hand as he spoke, who, evading the dangerous theme he seemed anxious to prolong, said, as she disengaged her trembling hand: "There "is something so cross in your thus miss-"ing the king, my lord, a second time, "that I am tempted to believe there is "some fatality hanging over my captivity; "or haply," she added with a smile, "like "other distressed damsels in the days of "chivalry, I am under the spell of some "powerful *enchanter*." At the word *enchanter* Imogen coloured, and a glance at the baron's countenance covered her with confusion.

"If," said he laughingly, "there is a "spell in the question, 'tis I only who am "under its influence. Would to heaven "that spell was indeed of mutual force, "and that the sorceress who exerted, be- "came the sufferer of her own art. I be- "lieve, in spite of the Mosaic law and "the capitularies of Charlemagne, I should "*suffer the witch to live*, and even steal "my own existence from her's."

Imogen was at this moment still stand- ing near the book-cabinet, and now turned over the leaves of a volume she held in her hand with great eagerness, as if wholly intent on the occupation: "But I fear," said the baron, after a minute's silence, "that I intrude. When I assured you "this tent should be an inviolable sanc- "tuary, I did not mean to secure a sav- "ing clause in my own favour. Shall I "leave you," said he, "in the midst of "society which will at least afford you

" entertainment; though I fear not much
" instruction?"

" Suffer me then," said Imogen with an insinuating smile, " to enjoy your " society, from which I shall derive " both."

The baron bowed with a look of proud and gratified feeling.

" I believe," continued Imogen, " I " should apologize for this apparent breach " of trust, but the door of the cabinet flew " open to my touch; and to confess the " truth, I was as much pleased to examine " its contents as amazed to find such a " treasure among the camp equipage of a " military commander. How few, amidst " the tumult of warfare, the dissipation of " a military life, would find leisure for in- " tellectual improvement, or cherish a taste " for literary pursuit!"

" And yet," said the baron, " my sweet " flatterer, I am afraid that such an appen- " dage in a tent wears rather an air of

" foppery, for even the gravest pursuit *has*
" its fopperies; but to confess the truth,
" early habits of study have so methodized
" into principle, that on the score of self-
" denial I should have more merit in re-
" linquishing my books than retaining
" them as the constant companions of my
" public as well as my private life. I may
" say, with the elegant Pliny, that 'they
" feast my soul with a voluptuousness
" which is never followed by disgusts;'
" and though my leisure to enjoy them is
" limited, yet it is wonderful how many
" odd minutes and half-hours lie heavy on
" one's hands even in the most active pro-
" fessions, which a book delightfully and
" usefully occupies. Apropos of Pliny,
" whose charming letters I have so often
" seen in your hands at Montmorell in
" the original. Here is the first French
" translation of him we hear of; and what
" renders it doubly interesting, in spite of
" its obsolete style, is, that it was made by
" the beautiful duchess of Burgogne, niece

" to the cardinal de Bologne, in conjunc-
" tion with our unfortunate king John,
" so long the prisoner of the illustrious
" Edward the Third of England."

" Interesting indeed!" said Imogen, eagerly taking the book from his hands; " and it reflects no little honour on our " sex that the duchess was among the " earliest revivers of letters at a period of " literary darkness, when the unhappy " royal John, with all his passion for books, " could not collect above twenty volumes " in his library."

" But we must not let this charming " duchess engross all the merit," said the baron, drawing out a small volume; " for " here are some charming poems by her " fair-contemporary, Jane of Bourbon, wife " of Charles the Fifth, who engaged Philip " de Vitri, the beloved friend of Petrarch, " to translate into French verse the Meta-" morphoses of Ovid. How could Pe-" trarch at that very period give us the " name of barbarians, when France boast-

"ed two such women as the duchess of "Burgogne and Jane of Bourbon?"

"And what have you got on this shelf," said Imogen, "that looks so splendidly "attired?"

"The ephemeral productions of modern "holiday-writers," said the baron, "al-"most beneath your attention, and merely "calculated to amuse the mind, not to "inform it."

"Nay," said Imogen smiling, "though "I have lived so long with one of the "*prejudiced literati* of Francis the First's "day, I have not imbibed her pedantry "so strongly as to look down with con-"tempt on every work that does not smell "of the must of antiquity. Some of the "very few modern works the library of "Montmorell afforded gave infinite plea-"sure in their perusal."

"Indeed!" said the baron; "then give "me leave to recommend to you this little "volume: it is Astrea, a charming romance "by d'Urfé, a novel-writer of late date,

" to whom fancy and common sense are
" much indebted: the one is chastened,
" corrected, and restrained by his judg-
" ment; the other restored to his place in
" the empire of imagination."

" I have read but few romances," said Imogen; " those few which the library of
" Montmorell supplied did not induce me
" to wish to extend my studies in that line. I
" remember being heartily weary of the wild
" tales of Diargue, the disciple of Ariosto,
" and not much interested in the wonder-
" ful histories of Leuceppe and Clitophon,
" or the romantic loves of Theagenes and
" Charicles."

" Which last," said the baron, " is in
" fact the progenitor of the whole fan-
" tastic species of romance. Strange to
" say, it was the work of an holy father,
" the sage Heliodorus, bishop of Irecas;
" and so enamoured was the pious divine
" of his literary bantling, that when con-
" demned by a most gothic synod either
" to suppress his book or resign his epis-

" copal honours, he (in the true spirit of
" authorship) preferred the latter, and sa-
" crificed the mitre for the bays, the cro-
" sier for the pen."

" He is not, I believe," said Imogen,
" the only sacred author romance can
" boast of in her service. I remember
" when first I came to Montmorell, Theo-
" dore, the young page (who was deeply
" read in romantic lore), lent me the
" Feats of Charlemagne the Great, by
" the archbishop Turpin; containing many
" wonderful exploits, and supernatural
" deeds, performed by the emperor before
" the walls of Narbonne. At first, my
" young and untutored imagination was
" captivated by this species of fiction: but
" as my judgment matured, not even the
" sanctity of the author was sufficient to
" awaken any interest to a recapitulation
" of extraordinary adventures, which
" shocked probability without amusing the
" mind; of extravagant actions, not even
" the licence of romance should tolerate;

" while the high-wrought virtues of their
" all-perfect heroines, and supernatural
" heroes, put my patience sadly to the test,
" and never failed to exhaust my attention.
" In fact, I believe nothing can be less sub-
" lime than my taste; for beyond the
" boldest flights of extravagant fancy, or
" eccentric genius, I prefer those works
" whose mild and natural fictions touch
" the heart, and call its sweetest feelings
" into being; those simple stories which
" unfold a series of events, such as life's
" vicissitudes may eventually display,—
" where the characters strongly drawn, but
" not over-wrought, are placed in interest-
" ing situations; and where the warm,
" the tender affections of the heart, form
" the ground-work of the piece."

" Yes," said the baron with a sigh, and fixing his delighted eyes on the face of Imogen, " my charming critic, you are " right, it is on the heart alone we are all " dependant for life's best blisses; reason " may degenerate into sophistry, fancy

"into delusion, but the heart, the heart "is the infallible, the immutable guide "to supreme felicity: and yet its vicissi- "tudes are dreadful; but its joys, its full "abundant joys—Oh! who would not "endure its sufferings for an age, to enjoy "its blisses but for an hour?"

"I must confess," said Imogen smiling, "*I am* not one of those enthusiastic *epi-* "*cures* in bliss."

"You! you! Imogen," exclaimed the baron, seizing both her hands, and gazing ardently on her: then suddenly letting them fall, he added, "Alas! thou knowest not "what thou art, the profound emotion of "which thou art capable! for *thy* heart, "I fear, lies yet unconscious of its riches."

Imogen, more confused by the manner in which these words were uttered than their purport, turned to the cabinet, and taking down another volume, said: "What "have we got here? Petrarch? How much "I regret my ignorance of the Italian "language, since it now prevents me sa-

"tisfying a curiosity so long indulged. "Pray, my lord, was not this far-famed "writer, the most ardent, the most con- "stant, the most unfortunate of lovers?"

"I believe," said the baron, smiling at the romantic simplicity of the question, and the *naïveté* with which it was demanded, "I believe, if you had given him the epithet "of the most *poetical*, it would be at least "as just as any you have honoured him "with, for I have always thought that "neither his amatory joys or sorrows were "of the heart: indeed, if I recollect "right, he somewhere acknowledges him- "self, 'that it was requisite he should be "unhappy;' for had his love been propi- "tious, we should have had no charming "plaintive sonnets; and I believe he would "rather have resigned his mistress than his "muse, and served the lady de Sade as "the bishop de Irecas did his episcopacy. "It is to his unhappy passion he owes his "immortality; this he foresaw: his love "sonnets will carry down his name to ages

"yet unborn, while his polemical and "other works survived not his own actual "existence; and yet to me his passion "for Laura, all-forcible as he delineates "its effects, appears a mere paradox. "How could he choose *her* as the mistress "of his soul, who was incapable of be- "coming the companion of his mind? "Laura, like many ladies of the first rank "in her day, was so profoundly ignorant "as not either to read or write, and spent "her life in a circle of un-ideaed women "at her loom, or her embroidery; and "what influence can mere unintelligent "beauty obtain over such a heart as a "man of Petrarch's genius and learning "must have possessed? Tell me, my sweet "friend, is not a sympathy of taste, sen- "timent, and pursuit, the surest foun- "dation for the tenderest, noblest, purest "love?"

"I should think so," said Imogen, faintly colouring.

"And I feel it," said the baron em-

phatically; "the wonderful influence of "mind over female charms, and the pas- "sions they are capable of awakening, is "scarcely yet understood in this half gothic "day; while man is even still struggling "with the prejudices, the ignorance, of "those barbarous ages which succeeded "to the all-illuminated day of wisdom, "knowledge, and science; woman, sa- "tisfied in the omnipotence of her beauty, "neglects to assert those claims on intel- "lectual graces, which can alone confirm "her empire over the understanding, exalt "her influence over the senses, and ren- "der the charms of her mind seducing as "those of her person."

"But is there not something Utopian "in this sketch of what female empire "*might* become?" said Imogen with a smile: "is it not a theory more beautiful "than practicable?"

"If you can indeed entertain such a "doubt," said the baron, "I can only "say that you are yourself the best proof

" of the fallacy of your own sceptic posi-
" tion; but lest you should object to
" a solitary exception in general assertion,
" I can at least bring classic authority to
" validate my hypothesis.

" In Greece, where beauty was deified,
" and the countless altars of the all-sub-
" duing goddess smoked with the inces-
" sant offerings of the most ardent vota-
" rists, woman was still taught to appre-
" ciate the powers of mind (even those
" whose profession was but to charm the
" senses); loveliness and intelligence were
" almost inseparably connected, as she
" who conquered by her beauty confirmed
" her empire by her wit. Aspasia came
" to Athens to teach eloquence from the
" lip of love. Socrates and Pericles be-
" came her pupils: the former imbibed
" the *philosophia amatoria* at the feet of
" his intelligent preceptress; and the latter,
" enamoured of her intellectual charms,
" made her his wife. Epicurus, who
" studied ease of mind too much to

" submit to the vicissitudes of passion, was " lured into attachment for his pupil " Leonsium, by the persuasive *Attic* ele- " gance of her literary works and con- " versation ; and it was not the mere per- " sonal attractions of Pythias, the wife of " Aristotle, which induced him to wish " she could be deified, and receive the " same worship as was paid to the god- " dess Ceres."

" If," said Imogen, " I was so excel- " lent a sophist as to controvert truths " which are morally undeniable, I am yet " too much a *woman* to wish to deny a " single assertion which could extend, " even in the least degree extend, the em- " pire of my sex. But Petrarch ! what " would have become of the unfortunate " Petrarch had the mind of Laura equalled " her person ?"—" He had not then lived " to sing his woes," said the baron, " but " had died in their endurance: and yet from " the first era of his passion he despaired " of obtaining its object ; for she was vir-

"tuous, and the faithful wife of another."
—"And can love survive hope?" asked Imogen earnestly.—"I fear it can," sighed the baron.—"But not if pride and reason "exert their powers," returned Imogen with animation.

"Ah, Imogen! is pride always victo-"rious in the combat with affection, or the "chill declamation of reason persuasive "as the eloquence of the heart?"

"Not, my lord, if we are determined to "listen to the heart only; if we are en-"amoured of the disorder and reject a "cure, as those who cherish weakness to "excite pity; or if we fancy our case "desperate, when we are not even in "danger."

"That is, my fair casuist, you think "the *heart* is as liable to hypocondriæ as "the body."

"Exactly."

"Ah, Imogen! It is for you only who "are in rude health, to talk lightly of that "disease which shakes the invalid to dis-

"solution. In the words of a divine "English poet:

"He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

The baron, fixing his eyes on Imogen's face, sighed and shook his head.

"But we are forgetting Petrarch, my "lord. Though you quarrel with him as "a lover, yet as a poet——"

"As a poet, and an amatory one, Pe- "trach stands almost unrivalled; will you "give me leave to introduce him to you "as such, through the medium of a very "indifferent translation?" He then presented Imogen a chair, and seating himself beside her, translated, in very poetical language, Petrarch's beautiful sonnet of "*Dubii amorosi*:" yet he seemed rather to recite from memory than to read; to utter the spontaneous effusions of his own heart, than of another's imagination; for while his eloquent lips did ample justice to the tender self-inquiries of the doubtful lover, his more eloquent eyes, beaming full on his auditress, illustrated the sensations he

described, and twice he repeated the impassioned exclamation,

" Oh ! viva morte ! O, dillitoso male,
" Comè puo tante in me—Sio no'l consento ? "

with a sensibility of voice, an energy of manner, that spoke the perfect consonance of the sentiment with his own feelings. The pause which succeeded was eloquenee itself ; Imogen was the first to dissolve the spell of dangerous silence. Gently drawing the book from his hand, she replaced it with a volume of Torquato Tasso, then with an air of playfulness said, " Were I " Tasso, I should be sadly jealous of this " monopolizing Petrarch."

" Confess," said the baron, seizing her hand, " are you most anxious I should " change the theme or the book ?"

" Both, both," said Imogen : " to-day " I am governed by the very soul of whim, " and should have run through the Alex- " andrian library with as much rapidity as " I am running through yours."

" Come, then, my charming Capricio, I

" will read at random the very page you " have opened." It was the beautiful sonnet " *Se d'Icaro leggeste e di Fetonte, &c. &c.*" and he read it with peculiar spirit and animation. " You see," said he, closing the book, " these Italians live " but to love, and make the object of " their lives the theme of their writings."

" We must believe it indeed," said Imogen ; " if Petrarch and Tasso are the " just representations of their country- " men, there is apparently, by this little " specimen, a strong coincidence in their " sentiments and writings."

" And in their lives a still stronger. " Tasso, like Petrarch, was early in life " forced to fly his native place, by the fac- " tion which disturbed it : and found a " patron in Alphonso, the second duke of " Ferrara, as did Petrarch in Coligni, and " in the accomplished Leonora D'Este a " Laura ; but something more fortunate " as a poetical enamorato. His sonnets " have more of the fire of love than its

" pathos; yet his passion for the charming
" princess D'Este was the efficient cause
" of all the sufferings that pursued his
" chequered life: but he was beloved, and
" that sweet conviction was an imperish-
" able source of felicity, of which even
" his enemies could not deprive him."

" I think I recollect the lady Magde-
" laine saying," returned Imogen, " she
" was at the court of Charles the Ninth
" when Tasso was introduced there by
" Luigi, the cardinal legate."

" Yes," said the baron, " it reflects
" *one* solitary beam of light upon the
" shadowy character of Charles, that he
" was sensible to the powers of genius.
" He received Tasso with the most flat-
" tering encomiums, and on his interces-
" sion pardoned a poet condemned to
" death for some heinous crime."

" We are so much the creatures of edu-
" cation, that 'tis possible, my lord, even
" Charles owed more of his vices to the
" example and precepts of those who sur-

" rounded him, than to the innate vi-
" ciousness of his own disposition; let us
" at least hope it, for the honour of hu-
" man nature."

" And you may add of learning and
" taste; for Charles was by no means de-
" ficient in either. I believe he ranks
" among our royal authors; if his treatise
" on hunting can be allowed as a suffi-
" cient claim on the honours of author-
" ship."

" Well, shall we go on with the ama-
" tory effusions of Tasso, or reconnoitre
" the charms of Italian prose? Here is a
" collection of charming noveletts by
" Bandello." He then (wholly intent on amusing his prisoner) read through the interesting tale from which Shakspeare has taken the happiest of his dramas, Romeo and Juliet. When he had finished, Imogen, the most animated of auditors, expreſſed her opinion of the story with justness and taste, and thanked the baron with expressions of the warmest approba-

tion for his spirited and elegant translation.

"If indeed," said the baron, "this "very loose translation possessed the merit "you so flatteringly ascribe to it, I should "have been less indebted for my inspira- "tion to the author than my auditress, "on whose patience I fear I have made "very exorbitant demands; but" (with a sigh he added), "hours such as these are "rarely sent, and the regret I should "feel in being now obliged to relinquish "the happiness they conferred would be "less poignant, if I dared to encourage "the hope that they would this evening "return. That trumpet's shrill blast "calls me to the duties of my pro- "fession; and an engagement to dine in "the tent of the duke de Biron, will give "me a tedious interval of uninteresting "existence, whose apathy shall heighten, "by contrast, those animated and elegant "enjoyments, reserved for happier mo- "ments. Dare I," he added in a suppli-

cating tone, "reckon on the return of "these precious moments, so dear to the "heart, the fancy, and the mind ?"

Imogen, with great modesty, but with that air of peculiar *naïveté* which was all her own, and which ever gave point to her manners when her heart was interested, assured him the most tedious hours she should pass, would be those which should intervene till his return. Prudence and timidity hurried after the candid avowal of her heart; but it could not be recalled, and the conscious blush which succeeded it did but heighten its effect. The baron, silent, but not insensible, bowed his gratitude on her hand, too delicate in such a moment even to raise that fair hand to his lips, and left the tent. When he was gone, Imogen, throwing herself on a seat, cast a look round the tent; she did not think so confined and comfortable an apartment could wear so desolate an air as the absence of its master shed over it; while even the chair he had occupied, the book

he had turned down open on the table, assumed an interest from that circumstance; yet her wish of indulging unrestrained the flow of feeling and thought that agitated her mind, lessened her regret for his temporary absence. The visible change in his manners and conversation, so different from that of the former day, was the first object of her cogitation; the impassioned sentiments of fervid and impetuous affection no longer burst in all the eloquence of love from his lips, but gave way to that playful easy strain of gallantry, which even indifference can assume, but which the serious energy of passion disdains to use; while on the subject of his union with mademoiselle de V—— he was still mysteriously silent. His conversation, elegant and lively, appeared solely animated by the wish to entertain, apparently unconscious that it instructed and enlightened while it interested and amused; it was the effusion of a rich and intelligent mind, a refined and cultivated taste; but Imogen thought of the

impulsive dictates of an enamoured heart, which glowed in his recital the preceding day, and sighed—"Alas," said she, "how "great is the inconsistency of the human "heart, when agitated by the conflicts of "reason and passion; oh! why should I "regret what I should so highly approve; "why deplore what I should so devoutly "desire? This interesting, this noble "and virtuous being is the destined hus- "band of another, every way deserving "of his tenderness and esteem: his gra- "titude to her, his duty to himself, his "father, and his king, demand the sa- "crifice: the *sacrifice!* oh, Montargis, "will it indeed be a *sacrifice!*—Foolish "heart! how eagerly dost thou believe "what it would be misery supreme to "doubt; yet though this insuperable "bar did not exist, the object of thy "secret homage could ne'er be thine. "May'st thou with all thy keen and glow- "ing feelings moulder in thy kindred dust, "ere thy fond dotage impels Imogen de

"St. Dorval to plant a dagger where he
"wounds inflicted by the fatal love of
"Julia de Ribemont still rankles. Oh no!
"break with thy sufferings, but let thy
"last pulsation be the triumphant throb of
"virtue victorious over passion!"

Such was the train of reflection which agitated the tender bosom of the youthful prisoner, when the page who had hitherto attended spread an elegant collation; and, like the subtle dwarfs which fairy love places near the beautiful persons of the enchanted damsels, whom some magician holds in "*sad endurance*," he hovered round her with wakeful attention, seemed to anticipate her wishes, and waited on her with the grace of a Ganymede. His intelligent countenance and lively looks induced Imogen frequently to address him, and his respectful manners, with a certain air of arch pertinence, repaid her for the condescension in this instance, as in every other since she had been the prisoner of Montargis. Imogen recognized the most re-

fined delicacy, a delicacy which never slumbered. She would have shrunk from the gaze of hacknied domestics, who, in the unhappy singularity of her situation, and the too pointed attention of the baron, might have found ample food for impertinent surmise and vulgar curiosity; but from the careless simplicity of the youthful page, who seemed not to have attained his fourteenth year, she had nothing to apprehend. She had observed that whenever the baron withdrew or entered the tent, he always closely drew the curtain after him; and that the page never left the outward apartment, which served as a kind of antichamber. The page, as usual, retired to his station when her solitary dinner was removed; and to banish the constant and dangerous subjects of her thoughts from her heart and imagination, she took up the volume of Italian novels he had been reading; and, from her perfect knowledge of the French and Latin languages, found no great difficulty in coming to the literal

sense of the author. But the spirit, the interest, the pathos, which the florid and elegant translation of the baron shed over the story, no longer captivated her willing attention. She wondered she had even been amused, and recollected the poet who wrote execrable verses, but read them in so graceful a manner, and so melodious a voice, that what in perusal was contemptible, in recitation was enchanting; and one seducing idea of the fascinating reader of Bandello soon lured her attention from the author. Resigning herself to the sweet strain of thought which love unallayed by every other sentiment awakened, she threw aside the book, and clasping her hands, flung them over the back of the chair on which she sat, and gently pressed them with a cheek rosed with the blush of health and passion, and dimpled with one of those tender frolic smiles, which ever caught its spirit from some felicitous sensation.

The bodkin which fastened up her hair had given way, and her unconfined tresses

fell in rich disorder over her neck and shoulders. Thus lost in sweet abstraction she had remained for a considerable time, when the broad mass of light which flushed through the scarlet curtains of the tent suddenly became obscure; and Imogen, raising her eyes to discern the cause, beheld it slowly withdrawn, and several heads appeared, each towering over the other, and all animated by an expression of surprise, curiosity, triumph, and admiration.

Imogen involuntarily uttered an exclamation of surprise, and arose in great confusion: the curtain instantly closed, and the groupe retired. Almost in the same instant the page entered: his face flushed, his consternation evident; falling at Imogen's feet he exclaimed:

"Lady, I am lost if you tell my lord." Imogen obliging him to rise, he continued: "Certainly I was to blame to leave the "antichamber; but who could have fore-"seen? yet I promised my lord not to "leave the tent; no, not for a moment:

" no gentleman would then have dared to
" intrude, because they knew I would tell
" the baron. But Antonine, the little
" drummer, so famous at quoits, was play-
" ing not fifty paces from the tent, and I
" left it for a moment. The gentlemen,
" who saw me I suppose, took that oppor-
" tunity."

Imogen, who now understood the cause of his terror, assured him she would conceal the circumstance from his lord, and asked who the intruders were?

The page's countenance brightening, he exclaimed: " Pardie, lady, they were no
" common intruders either. There was
" first monseigneur the marquis de Sancy,
" colonel of the Swiss guards; and my
" lord high constable de Montmorency,
" and the young count de Chateauneuf,
" and some others. To confess the truth,
" lady, they have been all hovering about
" the tent since it was known that my
" lord's prisoner was a beautiful young lady
" of high quality, especially the marquis

" de Sancy, who is a rare pleasant gentle-
" man as any in the camp. To-day he
" met my lord the baron coming out of
" the tent, and I heard him say it was not
" agreeable to the laws of war he should
" monopolize the richest spoil to himself,
" and prayed to be introduced to you.
" My lord looked grave, and said him
" nay. 'Then take care,' said the mar-
" quis; 'when the gallant king returns
" from Folambray he will shew himself as
" little of the *Scipio* as yourself, baron.'
" Yes, that was the word: on which my
" lord looked graver still, and said he was
" only waiting for an audience from the
" king to have you restored to your friends,
" who were of illustrious rank. Then he
" drew the marquis away by the arm, and
" I heard no more, But I am sure the
" marquis must have bribed the sentinel
" to gain admittance, and if my lord
" knew it he would doubtless send him a
" cartel."

Imogen, extremely mortified and shock-

ed, and who now saw her situation in a new and humiliating light, assured the page she would not betray him, and he retired satisfied and grateful: while the hint he had insinuated of the *cartel* determined her not to reveal the incident, which, however insulting to her, might endanger a life a thousand times more precious in her eyes than her own. At that moment the baron entered. Her *recent* agitation still flushed her complexion to its deepest tint, her beautiful hair still hung in negligent disorder, and the delightful emotions she had a moment before indulged in had not yet withdrawn their sweet and tender expression from her countenance. Coquetry would have triumphed in the wild and bewitching disorder which invested the air, the person, and manner, of the fascinating prisoner when the baron appeared.

"And whence this fresh blaze of beauty, "my charming captive?" said he, gazing earnestly at her. "Have you been on

" another embassy to Proserpine more pro-
" pitious than the former ?"

" No," said Imogen gaily, " I have only
" made an expedition to the regions of
" *Fancy*, and have not yet recovered from
" the influence of her inspirations."

" And if Fancy could boast of her own
" apotheosis, she would doubtless fix on
" thee as her high priestess, who equally
" feel and inspire her brightest visions.
" How rich would her altars then be in
" offerings, and how many who came to
" worship the deity would turn apostate,
" and adore the priestess."

" And you, my lord, I should suppose,
" were already invested with the sacerdo-
" tal stole, and presided among the high
" priests of gallantry over that court
" established in this province by your own
" provincial troubadours."*

* The *high court of love* was established in Picardy, the constant rival of Provence, by the troubadours. It had its *plaids et jeux sous l'ormel*, consisting of knights

"No," said the baron smiling, "I cannot boast of such an honour; but were "faith and devotion sufficient to obtain "it, I should rank high in the *album sanctorum* of love, for I am an enthusiastic "devotee, capable of attaining to the most "daring heights of amorous fanaticism, "worshipping the deity in spirit and in "truth; and, like the members of the Greek "church, doing homage to the picture of "my tutelar saint, not by prostration, but "by a *kiss*." The baron drew a miniture from his bosom, and, having devoutly pressed it to his lips, presented to the eye of Imogen the lively resemblance of the *novice of St. Dominick!* "Yes," said he,

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and ladies of high rank exercised and approved in courtesy, who assumed a judicial power in matters of the most delicate nature; nor did their decrees receive effect from the voluntary submission of the constituent members only; the general courtesy of the times stamped them with unquestionable authority, and the legislation itself did not refuse to sanction them with its approbation.

fondly gazing on it, "a saint from whose "lips I first received the purest essence of "true religion, and whose sublime senti- "ments even at her feet I vowed should "be my orthodoxy."

A rapturous recollection flashed like lightning over the memory of Imogen, and she beheld herself in the gallery of Montmorell, the suppliant minstrel at her feet: for a moment she gazed in extreme emotion on the picture, while, as the baron again pressed it to his lips, a secret delight thrilled through her heart; but the sweet effusion was but transient, it faded before the chill suggestion of prudence, that the picture of the lady de St. Dorval should not remain in the possession of the baron de Montargis, the husband of the lady de V——, and she coldly said, "To have "secretly drawn my picture, and to have "bestowed it on another, was an unjust- "tifiable action in Theodore: in you, my "lord, it will be but an act consonant to "your usual delicacy to restore it to the "original."

"Or else," said the baron sportively, "I suppose you will cite me to appear in "the high court of love, and oblige me "to be tried by the degrees of the *preaux* "chevaliers and *priuse* dames of which it is "composed."

"Your gaiety my lord," said Imogen, deeply wounded by what appeared to her agitated feelings the very levity of indifference, "is very enviable;" and, in spite of every effort to restrain them, the tears rushed to her eyes.

The baron started, the hilarity of his countenance fled, and, with a look of the strongest emotion, he pursued the pearly drops that stole down the cheek of Imogen, repeating in a tone of perturbation, "*My* gaiety! God of heaven! Enviable! "Am I then so finished, so very finished "an actor? has the necessity, the dread- "ful necessity, of self-subjection so stampt "the traces of dissimulation on me, that I "can appear nothing but the thing I am "not? Oh God! why must I conceal a

" feeling from her, by whom alone every
" feeling is governed? Why can I not un-
" fold my whole soul, oh, Imogen! to thy
" investigation? Alas, no! Coward like,
" I strive to conceal its weakness, its secret
" workings, its conflicting passions, even
" from my own observation. I strive to
" dream myself into delusion, and shun
" the truth with horror. I would fancy I
" am all I appear to be, and cheat my heart
" into the belief it bled not in anguish
" beneath the veil of this all-enviable
" gaiety. Enviable! merciful heaven!
" The wretch who, condemned to die a
" death of agony, yet clings in life's sur-
" viving hopes with an heart stretchedupon
" the wheel of insupportable suspense,
" revels in bliss compared to what *I* have
" suffered since thy presence has again
" revived those emotions, those sentiments,
" which fate vainly opposes, and which I
" hourly feel are interweaving their in-
" fluence with my very existence. It is in
" vain I would have taught myself to for-

" get thee ; it was in vain I said *she can* " *never be mine ;* yet still thy idea, like the " glowing mildness of an evening sun, " stole o'er the horizon of memory, and " shed its vital beam on an heart which " again from the sphere of love receives " its every motion. Oh, Imogen ! with- " draw not this precious hand from me. " It is not yet criminal to imprint on it " the effusions of a soul, which from the " moment I first beheld thee was all thy " own : it is not yet criminal to gaze on " that countenance, whose sweet intelli- " gence betrays the union of our minds, " the sympathy of our mutual feelings : it " is not yet a crime to dare to love thee. " A crime ! O God ! to love thee as thou " art worthy to be loved, is to love virtue " in its purest essence and fairest form !"

Imogen, overwhelmed, dissolved, amazed, struggling between the conflicts of duty, reason, pride, and love, released her hand, and faintly said : " My lord, you forget " that it is the baron de Montargis who

"addresses the daughter of the count de "St. Dorval; that it is the betrothed hus- "band of the lady de V—— who ——"

"Forget!" interrupted the baron, "for- "get! Oh, would I could indeed forget! "would I could indeed resign myself to "the sweet illusion that I was still the "*minstrel of Provence*, and thou the *novice* "*of St. Dominick!* Oh, Imogen! were "such indeed our rank and lot in life, "the heart, the imagination, luxuriate in "the unambitious felicity which might have "then been ours; then the baleful breath "of hereditary discord had not blasted our "opening joys; the chilling influence of "interest had not frozen our blushing "loves even in their spring of beauty; the "daring views of self-wrapt ambition had "not trampled on the best affections of "the heart, nor the stern voice of duty "forbid that union which *love* had formed "and virtue consecrated; all that this "world can give of bliss had been ours, "and the tender heart would have been

"spared the lingering torture of throb-
"bing in sad despondency through count-
"less ages of despair and sorrow!"

The baron had again taken the hand of Imogen, and as he concluded a burning tear dropt upon its snowy surface; that tear was indeed the eloquence of a heart whose feeling mocked the power of expression. Imogen impulsively pressed the hand which grasped hers, then turned aside her head and wept, faintly exclaiming: "Leave "me! oh in mercy leave me!" The baron seizing both her hands, imprinted them with an ardent kiss—"Imogen, one "word, and I obey thee. Whence flow "these tears? spring they from a kindred "source with those that filled my eyes? "Imogen!—forgive!—but—dost thou in-"deed deplore the severity of that fate "which drives me to despair? Weepest "thou in pity or in love? Oh, Imogen!" gently insinuating his arms around her, and straining her to his breast, "do our "hearts now beat against each other in all

" the kindred sympathy of passion, or do
" I feel the throb of thine less ardent than
" my own? Oh no that glance was my
" assurance."

" Leave me, I supplicate," she faintly exclaimed, withdrawing herself from the baron's glowing fold.

" In a moment such as this, Imogen,
" leave thee! Oh, not for worlds!"

Modesty and pride took the alarm. " My lord, I *command you* to leave me!" said the daughter of St. Dorval, in a voice full of dignity, and flinging the baron from her; who, catching her robe as she retreated, exclaimed: " Imogen, what is it you fear?
" Beaming in innocence, supreme in thy
" own strength, the radiant ægis of virtue
" shields thee equally from attaint and
" danger."

" *But not from insult,*" returned Imogen indignantly, and retired to the inner division of the apartment, closely drawing the curtain which screened it.

The profound sighs of the baron only

pierced this slight barrier, which virtue honoured by virtue rendered inviolable. Not even by a word did he prophane the silence offended delicacy imposed; and after having remained for a few minutes in the attitude Imogen had left him, his arms still outstretched to detain her, he rushed from the tent. When Imogen was assured of his departure, she flung herself on her couch, and, giving full scope to the tide of emotion that swelled her heart, wept tears of real anguish. For the first time she considered the passion the baron professed for her as equally derogatory to her principles, her delicacy, and her pride.

"He has at last," said she, "dropt the "veil. He confesses his tenderness, if it "merits the title, had no object in view "save the gratification of temporary pro- "pensity. From the first he *knew I could* "*never be his.* Another had his vows, his "respect, his gratitude; while I, all-be- "lieving and all-deceived, was still con- "sidered as the object of idle dalliance.

" receiving with fond credulity avowals of " unsanctioned love, my pride, my duty, " my reason, should have rejected. But " who would have been deceived as I " was, and doated on deception?" All the baron's perfections, his insinuating graces, his noble mind, his genius and virtues, rushed on her dissolving heart, and passion held a momentary triumph, but it was but momentary. "No," said Imogen, "I never can be his; he said it; but " yet he knows me not; he knows not the " powers of that mind, of which he has " made the heart's weakness the criterion. " *I will not languish through countless ages* " *of despair and sorrow.* And yet, I could " have loved him! could! oh God!—but " it is over! I can also cease to love when " virtue commands it. My passions are " human, but I have no common mind, " I feel I have not; I always felt it, even " in the convent of St. Dominick, though " all-dependent on the bounty of its " members. My heart *shall* submit to my

" reason, though it burst in the struggle. " My mother! my sainted mother! I will " emulate thy virtues, and thy errors shall " be my beacon; for thine also, like thy " child's, were the errors of love. And thou " my father, who lookest up to me for that " beam of bliss that is to gild the evening " of thy stormy life, thou shalt not look " in vain." At the recollection of her father Imogen's tears flowed afresh, and his probable sufferings on her account rushed to her mind; while a keen self-reproach that so little of her thoughts had lately been devoted to him wrung her heart, and added to the conflicts of her mind.

CHAP. XVIII.

Most sacred fyre, that burnest mightily
In living breasts, ykindled first above
Among the eternal spheres and lampling sky,
And thence poured into men, which men call *love*,
Not that same which doth base affection move
In bruitish minds,
But that sweet fit that doth true beauty love,
And chuseth virtue for its dearest dame,
Whence springs all noble deeds and never-dying fame:
Well did antiquity a god thee doom.

SPENSER.—*Fairy Queen.*

To urge bold virtue's unremitted nerve,
And wake the strong *divinity* of soul.

AKENSIDE.

IMOGEN had passed the night in restless agitation; her transient repose was broken by starts of causeless horror, or by dreams of frightful import; and when towards the morning dawn exhausted nature had plunged her into a deep and heavy

sleep, she was suddenly awakened by a repeated discharge of fire arms that shook the couch on which she reposed. A new sense of danger assailed her heart. She had not taken off her cloaths the preceding night: she now rushed from her couch to the outward apartment; it was empty, as was the antichamber.

The firing continued, and noise and tumult roared on every side. Imogen, breathless and panting, endeavoured to collect her scattered thoughts. Danger and the baron de Montargis alone presented themselves to her mind. At that moment the page entered, followed by an officer. He advanced to Imogen, and said: "The "baron de Montargis, madam, commends "him to you."

"He is safe, I hope?" breathlessly interrupted Imogen.

"I hope so, madam," returned the stranger; "but *his* is a post of danger. The "besieged have made a *sortie* and a furious "attack on one of the outposts, which

" the baron has been ordered to succour.
" As he mounted his horse he wrote a few
" lines on this slip of paper; then folding
" it round this trinket, which he said be-
" longed to his illustrious prisoner, bade
" me to deliver it into her own hands, then
" rushed to the scene of action."

The officer presented the little packet to the trembling Imogen, and with a respectful bow retired. Imogen flung herself on a chair: for a moment deprived of all motion, she could not open the packet; at last her trembling hands unfolded it, something fell, she suppose it to be her own picture, and let it lie on the ground, while she read the following billet:

" Fear not for thyself; the guardian spirit of innocence and virtue hovers round thee; the God of goodness is thy shield. I am rushing to battle, perhaps to death. If this hour is my last, it will be at least the most glorious of my life. Then commend thee to the king in person; he will restore thee to thy father: and give the in-

closed a place in thy bosom, for in life or death its original was all thy own.

" DE MONTARGIS.

" I cannot part with thy beloved resemblance until the heart which now beats against it shall cease to throb. Again thine, for ever thine."

Imogen, almost lifeless, fell back on her chair. She seemed for the first time to feel *she loved*. Hope for a moment revived her failing senses.

" He is in no danger," said she; " the " world he was born to serve, to adorn, " to instruct, has yet great and unsatis- " fied claims on him; and Providence " will spare him as its best representative " on earth!" She then took up the trinket; it was a small gold case, which opened by a spring, and Imogen beheld a beautiful and striking resemblance of the baron de Montargis in his minstrel habit. She pressed it to her lips and to her heart;

and, while the firing continued with fresh force and awakened new fears, she dropt on her knees, her heart offered up prayers of supplication for the safety of its object, while every shot that reached her ear seemed to wound that tender anxious heart in its most vital nerve. The firing at last ceased. She flew to the outward apartment, and dispatched the page to learn if all was over, if his lord was safe; but before the boy returned the firing was again renewed, and Imogen again trembled, prayed, and wept. The boy at last returned.

"It is all over," exclaimed he joyfully; "my lord has beat the *poltroons* back, "and——" "*Is he safe?*" was all the trembling Imogen could utter. The page losing the hilarity that animated his countenance, returned: "My lord is, I fear, "sadly wounded. Just now, as he led a "prisoner of great consequence to the "king's tent, I perceived he walked with "difficulty, he looked pale, and his scarf "was bathed in blood."

Imogen clung to a chair for support; her heart died within her bosom; she attempted to speak, but her lips moved in silence. The boy, looking on her compassionately, said: "But I may be mistaken, lady. I "will run and bring you a better account." He flew out of the tent, and Imogen sunk on the chair in a state of dreadful suspense, vibrating between hope and terror, alternately the prey of either; her eye tearless, her cheek pale, her hands clasped; near half an hour had elapsed when a footstep was heard on the outside apartment; the curtain was drawn, and the baron himself appeared.

His looks were haggard and ghastly, his complexion colourless, his arm bound in a scarf stained with blood. Imogen with a mild exclamation of joy and horror, sprung forward to meet him, and fell senseless at his feet.

The energy of her spirits, the strength of her feelings, vanquished the weakness of a frame greatly debilitated by the re-

peated agitations of her mind. She almost instantly recovered, and found herself supported in the baron's arms. With a look of tender inquiry she raised her eyes to his, but suddenly let them fall, abashed by the expression of his triumphant glance. The baron did not, *could not*, speak; his heart was too full to give expression to its feelings, though his whole soul swam in his eyes, and fluttered on his lips. He pressed the hand he held to his forehead and his heart; transport breathed in his short-heaved sighs, and delight and gratitude shone in his smiles. At that moment two surgeons, followed by some of the baron's attendants, entered the tent. Imogen's fears again took the alarm, as with professional pomposity these gentlemen spread out as many bandages, instruments, &c. &c. as might serve a military hospital after a general engagement. Her cheek again grew pale, and she perceived not she was an object of more attention and observation to the bystanders than the baron him-

self. The baron with a look full of eloquence, and in a low voice, entreated her to retire; but as the wound, though it had bled copiously, was but slight, and a little above the wrist, so that it was only requisite to tuck up the sleeve of his habit to dress it, Imogen's courage returned, animated by joy, and she smilingly said: "Are you then, my lord, so little versed "in the rules of chivalry? Was there ever "yet a brave and gallant knight who when "wounded did not prefer trusting for his "cure to the skill of some fair damsel than "to Æsculapius himself?"

The baron only answered her gaiety with a smile full of expression, and she continued to hover round him with endearing attention, tearing the bandages and assisting the surgeons to bind up the wound, and saying repeatedly to herself, "Surely this I would do for a stranger."

Meantime the baron continued silent, but his speaking glance pursued her every motion. Imogen observed the paleness of

his cheek, and she presented him a glass of cordial. He gently put it back, and said in a low voice: "Thou hast already "presented me an *elixir*, the elixir of life "itself."

Imogen, colouring and smiling, poured out a second glass, touched it with her lips, and, presenting him another, said:

"Do you then refuse to pledge me?"

The baron put aside the cup she offered with the air and look of an Hebe, and snatching the glass her lips had enriched, quaffed it off, and bowed on the hand to which he returned it.

The surgeons and attendants, with a look of important significance, retired. Their looks had not escaped the sensitive delicacy of Imogen: and when she again found herself alone with the baron, covered with confusion, she retired to a distant part of the tent; while the incident of the preceding evening, and the sentiments and determinations it gave rise to, rushed across her mind, and stood opposed to the tender emotion of the present moment.

Artless and unsophisticated, equally the child of *nature* and of reason, she had not the power to conceal those feelings she had strength of mind to determine on subjugating. After a long and impressive silence, during which the baron's countenance betrayed the strongest agitation, he arose, and seating himself by Imogen, in a voice full of emotion, said:

"Imogen, the struggle is over, the victory is thine! Thy virtue, thy tenderness, have effected what even thy beauty and thy genius could not accomplish. The prejudices of *sect*, the rancour of hereditary hatred, the influence of tyrannic duty, fastidiousness of a false sense of honour, and the splendid lures of interest and ambition, all, all lie vanquished, and love, virtue, and Imogen, are alone triumphant! Nay, sweet maid, hear me out in patience, then resolve, decide for me; be thou my destiny, for in thy hands I place the future fate of my existence.

"Imogen, I left thee in a state of mind
"last night which it were vain to agitate
"thine by describing. It was a dreadful
"conflict: even now I shudder at the con-
"test my reason and my heart, my duty
"and my love, sustained. Oh, Imogen!
"give me thy pity, while I confess that I
"believed both reason and duty com-
"manded me for ever to resign thee, for
"many a solemn tie had bound me to
"another; and thou wert—the daughter
"of *St. Dorval!* Yes, it was in the over-
"flow of filial tenderness and filial duty,
"when my mind was weakened by suffer-
"ing, and my frame debilitated by sick-
"ness; when I sunk in my father's arms,
"oppressed by his tenderness as he wept
"tears of joy over his recovering son;
"while the lovely preserver of my liberty
"and life stood beside us, shared in our
"transports, and mingled her tears with
"ours; it was then I suffered my father
"to place my hand in hers, and—Oh,
"Imogen! spare me the rest; duty and

"gratitude triumphed, and thou wert—
"resigned!

"The day of my marriage with made-
"moiselle de V——(who had merit and
"charms to awaken a passion which I
"could never feel) was fixed. I had de-
"termined never more to behold thee;
"but from my father (who had so early
"made himself the master of the secret
"of what he termed my romantic passion)
"I had received a promise that previous to
"that momentous day, he would rescue
"thee from the cruel destiny which await-
"ed thee, and provide for thee a comfort-
"able independence.

"I had every reliance on the humanity
"of my father's heart, the rectitude of
"his mind, and I guaranteed his promise
"by a solemn vow that I would never give
"my hand to mademoiselle de V—— till
"it was performed.

"Both events were delayed by the per-
"turbation of public affairs. My father
"and myself were obliged to follow the

" king to the sieges of Aix-la-Chapelle
" and Laon, and mademoiselle de V——
" remained with her aunt at Paris. Then,
" Imogen, an accident the most extraor-
" dinary gave thee back to me in a situa-
" tion the most interesting, the most
" heroic. The common-place qualifica-
" tions of mademoiselle de V—— shrunk
" before the more than mortal virtues of
" my lovely heroine. Beaming in beauty,
" eminent in genius, supreme in virtue,
" at one moment I beheld thee opposing
" thyself to death in its most dreadful
" aspect, to save a new-found father's life;
" the next, all soul-dissolving softness, all
" bewitching insinuation, delicate though
" playful, reserved though tender, thy
" mind endued with more than manly cou-
" rage, thy heart with more than woman's
" softness! Now, from thy lip of love, I
" caught the precept of wisdom and of
" knowledge; and now in a voice of
" spheral melody received the purest do-
" cuments of sentiment and taste, while

"the unbidden blushes of thy modest "cheek, the feeling throb of thy unso- "phisticated heart, contributed, with thy "mind's intelligence and thy person's "charms, to renovate a passion which "time, absence, reason, and duty, might "have faded into a dear and tender re- "collection of its once adored object, "but which, at sight of thee, in all thy "blaze of excellence, again seized on my "heart with more than all its former power, "circulates through every vital artery, and "forms my very soul. Yet, Imogen, I "checked the tide of passion, stifled "every sigh, and struggled with my "wishes; and hadst thou still been cold, "I had haply still been silent.

"But oh, my sweet friend! last night "that heart, whose soft pulsation answer- "ed to the throb of mine, that glance "whose glowing beam shot hope and joy "over every kindling sense.—God of "heaven! sure it was an effort more than "mortal, that in that ecstatic moment tore

" me from thee, or rather say it was thy
" better reason triumphed over mine. The
" night which succeeded to that moment
" of transient felicity was dreadful, my
" mind was torn by insupportable con-
" flicts; the long and unrequited tender-
" ness of an amiable woman, my honour
" so solemnly engaged, my duty to my
" father, to my king, opposed to love, to
" happiness, and Imogen. Oh, Imogen!
" thou whose every passion is the willing
" subject of thy reason; thou canst form
" no idea of that raging fever of the
" mind when struggling between the
" conflicts of the passion and the reason.
" Overcome by the contest, yet still unde-
" cided to which to assign the victory,
" in this moment of awful hesitation, I
" was called on for corporal exertion,
" when the mind was weakened and de-
" bilitated, for animal courage when moral
" vigour was subdued; yet the wild irrita-
" tion of my feelings nerved my arm. I
" flew to the hottest spot in the scene of

"action, but not until I had interested
"my king in thy favour, not until I sent
"thee some faint remembrance of a love
"which, even in the moment when death
"hovered o'er me, filled my heart with
"thee alone.

"Yes, Imogen, even in the battle's
"fiercest fury thy image still pursued me,
"awakened a thousand tender fears for thy
"safety, suspended my up-lifted arm, and
"left my fame in danger; it was in a mo-
"ment such as this I received this wound,
"oh! it was love himself inflicted it—
"precious wound! it is to you I owe that
"undisguised, that unreserved avowal of
"tenderness which nature, under the in-
"fluence of terror, betrayed in thy fears for
"my safety; thy tenderness, thy anxiety,
"thy active solicitude, bind me thine for
"ever. Nay, my sweet friend, hear me
"out, bear with me yet a little longer; to
"break that inviolable contract my heart
"first made with thine would now alone
"be dishonour; all the persuasion I was

" master of I used to win thy love, nor
" hast thou denied I was successful: thy
" happiness is now involved in mine; my
" own I could sacrifice, thine I dare not,
" not even to gratify a father's *ambition*.

" No, there is no law, natural or moral,
" which obliges a child to offer himself,
" and what is dearer than himself, a vo-
" luntary victim on the altar of parental
" authority. I possess a free moral agency.
" I am capable of judging of what can
" constitute my own happiness or misery,
" and when virtue sanctions my views of
" the former, heaven itself would frown
" on its cowardly resignation, and virtue
" equally forbids me to abandon thee, or
" repay the tenderness and virtues of thy
" rival with hypocrisy and deceit; oh! say,
" shall I unite her destiny to that of a
" man who can only render her miserable
" as himself, or shall I requite the candid
" avowal of her love by feigning with coun-
" terfeit affection to return her tenderness?
" or openly strike at her heart by that un-

"disguised coldness and disgust which "would be the result of a union so repug-"nant to mine? No, I am not so ac-"complished a villain; not yet so deeply "plunged in simulation; I am even still "more to be pitied than condemned, "more unfortunate than guilty. You "only, oh Imogen! have I wronged, "when I resigned thee whom heaven had "assorted as my better self; yes, I will "fly to mademoiselle de V——, at her "feet I will unfold every secret of my "heart; she is proud, she is generous, "she will reject a hand, a person, unac-"companied by the heart; her passions "though strong are pliant; I know her "sensations seldom preserve a medium; "her character is composed of extremes, "and the sentiments which will succeed "to those she has already experienced, will "take their energy from the overflowing "of those which preceded them, and her "indifference will soon become as marked "as her former partiality. Some new ob-

"ject will awaken another romantic pas-
"sion, and I shall be forgotten.

"Nay, a moment's patience, and I have
"done. I know thou wilt urge (that first
"great obstacle vanquished) our families'
"rooted hatred, the difference of our re-
"ligion; but the omnipotence of love and
"reason shall subdue their united force.
"Is not the essence of our faith the same?
"Are not thy sublime sentiments my or-
"thodoxy? And for those idle ceremo-
"nies, framed to fascinate the vulgar soul,
"and win the faith through the medium of
"the senses, these thou wilt recant to satisfy
"the world's scruples: and for our fa-
"thers, are we not their *children*, their
"only children? And though their hearts
"in the first flush of anger cast us from
"them, yet, oh Imogen! the parent's heart
"is Nature's *throne: she* will exert her
"sweet prerogative, and give us back our
"tender claims. Then thou, more fa-
"voured than the herald dove of heaven's
"peace, shalt not only bear the *olive-*

" *branch* into our families, but also find
" a resting-place for thine own bosom.
" Meantime, until this blessed moment
" arrives, let us seize *this* golden oppor-
" tunity. Another day makes Laon the
" king's, and disbands his officers from im-
" mediate duty. On the skirts of the
" forest of Ardennes I possess a sweet re-
" treat, mine by my mother's right. Thi-
" ther, oh Imogen! let us fly from a world
" I know *thou* despisest, and I no longer
" prize. Let us renounce its cares, its
" errors, its prejudices, and its conten-
" tions: imparadised in sweet seclusion,
" all possessing and all possessed, let us
" snatch the wreath of bliss, which fate
" suspends o'er our heads, ere time withers
" its freshness: let us quaff the cup of
" rapture ere experience poisons its sweets.
" Loving and beloved, delighting and de-
" lighted, we will chasten the ardour of
" passion with the delicacy of sentiment,
" and strengthen its powers by the reci-
" procal communion of the mind's intelli-

"gence. Mutually exerting ourselves in "the cause of virtue, the happiness we "bestow on others shall be reflected back "on ourselves. Our souls, burning with "equal ardour to attain to the summit of "human excellence, and to diffuse it, "shall mingle and combine their forces, "and act with incessant energy in the "cause of reason and benevolence. Supe-"rior to those fatal prejudices from which "the sufferings of mankind emerge, the "spirit of truth shall fill our minds, and "our precepts and examples shall dissemi-"nate its salutary effects. Thus rich in "virtue and in love, our state will be that "of the beatified, and *that* heaven shall "be ours of which faith and fancy do but "dream."

The baron ceased, apparently overcome by that picture of virtuous felicity he had sketched in such warm tints; while his eager and enraptured eye pursued the varying expression of Imogen's countenance, which so finely pourtrayed the correspond-

ing emotions of her heart. Now transport's throb heaved her bosom with the wildest palpitation, and the languor of passion swam in her melting eye: now the spirit of virtue sublimed their glance, and kindled all their fire. Now the blush of love faded on her cheek beneath the oppressive joys which seized her imagination: and now the energy of virtue diffused a deeper glow. Alternately the mistress or the heroine, all impassioned or all sublimed, dissolved, elated, overwhelmed, she remained for a considerable time lost in the delirium of her heart and imagination.

The baron, who construed her silence, her abstraction, her great and visible emotion, into a tacit ratification of his heart's fond wishes, fell at her feet, and, seizing both her hands, raised his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed: "*Thou art mine!* and here "in the face of heaven I swear——"

Imogen released her hand, placed it on his lips, and almost breathless faintly interrupted him.

"Forbear, my lord!" she exclaimed, assisting him to rise, "you know not "what you do. One moment forbear! "and ——"

"Imogen, what meanest thou?" he tremulously demanded.

"Give me, my lord, give me but one "moment, and then!——"

She arose in great perturbation, walked up and down the tent with a varying pace; her heart throbbed with violence, her colour successively changed from white to red; by degrees her agitation subsided, an air of dignity gradually involved her whole form, the varying expression of her countenance assumed the character of self-confidence reposing on the united strength of reason and virtue; her *mind*, with all its native and uncommon powers, was for the first time called on to reveal its force: she felt the solemnity of the appeal, and triumphed in her conscious ability to answer it. The sentiments, the determinations, of the preceding night, rushed to her

memory, and strengthened the weakness of her heart. She approached the baron with a mild and steady countenance; then, seating herself opposite to him, she said with a gentle smile:

"My lord, I have to thank you for this "patient endurance of emotion, perhaps "too weakly indulged, and not without "difficulty repressed; for though I have "listened to you in silent attention, yet "it was with amazement, and sometimes "perhaps with a stronger, and more tender "sentiment. Yes, I will confess that my "heart entered but too deeply into those "visionary schemes which yours so strong-"ly, so dangerously, delineated; and my "mind became the willing captive of the "sophistry of yours. To me, my lord, you "have unfolded every sentiment of a heart "for the possession of which, sanctioned "by virtue, by duty, and by reason, I "would barter the empire of the world, "and think the purchase cheap." Imogen for a moment paused, the colour

heightened in her cheek, she sighed, and continued:

"Whatever were my native endow-
"ments, the unalienable possessions of my
"nature, I was ignorant of their power
"and extent until I first knew you, my
"lord. Till that period, perhaps the most
"momentous of my life, I knew not I had
"a heart so rich in sweet emotion, feel-
"ings capable of such profound sensibi-
"lity, so alive to woe, so awakened to
"bliss; for till then nor woe or bliss had
"e'er assailed me; my life a long dead
"calm, joyless though serene, uninterest-
"ing though unruffled, stole on in listless
"apathy, undelighting and undesired.
"Each day promised but the literal *echo*
"of that which had expired: I beheld its
"birth with indifference, and only felt a
"joy when its wearisome and oft-told
"round had crept into oblivion. I pressed
"my nightly pillow with no fond recol-
"lection to warm my dream; or if I
"dreamed of happiness, I wakened in

" amazement, and wondered if indeed it
" *could* exist, save in a dream. Then I
" rose without a hope to gild the coming
" hours, and wished for night to sleep and
" dream again. You came, my lord, in
" humble seeming came; but your mind
" scoffed at disguise, and you were still
" yourself. The attractive force of sym-
" pathy drew us to each other; the intel-
" ligence of thy mind called forth the bet-
" ter qualities of mine, and my soul in its
" progressive expansion did but emulate
" the grander elevation of yours. Im-
" mured from all kindred association, I
" resembled a flower sown by some vagrant
" breeze in a soil uncongenial to its natu-
" ture: drooping in the shade which chilled
" its growth and veiled its blushes, but
" permitted to receive the sun's nurturing
" glow, it lifts its languid head, and be-
" trays its blushing colours to the radiant
" beam. You came, my lord, and said,
" *Let there be light, and there was light.*
" Then each day was pregnant with in-

" terest, life assumed a new and lovelier
" aspect: I rose with the fond expectation
" of tasting joys more exquisite than those
" I had already experienced, and at night
" I pressed my pillow with the recollection
" of the day's events throbbing at my
" delighted heart; sweet was the dream
" of my rest, but sweeter still the awaken-
" ing thought which chased it from my
" pillow. Your rank in life I then thought
" inferior even to my own, all humble as
" it was; but with me you stood superior
" and alone; or if in the scale of human
" creation I assigned you a place, it only
" gave me a higher opinion of the species
" to which *you* belonged than in my mo-
" ments of warmest philanthropy I had
" dared to indulge in. Had I then pos-
" sessed the empire of the world, it had
" been thine. The empire of my heart
" was all I owned, and I bestowed it on
" thee. Then would I have flown with
" thee to the remotest corner of the earth,
" gladly have shared thy sorrows or thy

" joys, assuaged thy sufferings or exalted " thy pleasures."

" Imogen! Imogen!" wildly interrupted the baron, unable to repress the extacy of his heart.

" For then, my lord," continued Imogen firmly, without suffering him to proceed, " society had no claims on me which " (standing in the relation to each other " I then believed we did) could have been " injured. Desolate and alone, deserted " by the world, and ignorant of its opi- " nions or its laws, an alien from my birth, " *you* would have been *my world*; in you " all those ties so dear to the human heart " would have been united; and in joining " my destiny to yours I should have vio- " lated no duty, betrayed no trust, com- " mitted no injury. But now, my lord, " the sweet illusion is vanished. Hadst " thou been still but the minstrel of Pro- " vence, haply even still the daughter of " St. Dorval had been thine; but as the " baron de Montargis—never!"

" Never ! God of heaven ! Never ! Oh
" Imogen ! beware—thou——"

" My lord, I entreat you will hear me
" out. Since we parted in the gallery of
" Montmorell an extraordinary change has
" taken place in my situation. I am no
" longer an alien, unconnected, deserted ;
" the important scene of life is open to
" me ; I have received the part allotted
" me to perform ; and however frail, how-
" ever weak, the secret movements of my
" heart, my actions at least shall not sully
" the dignity of the character I am to
" sustain. I owe a duty to society which
" I will not betray. Yes, I will respect
" those social bonds which draw mankind
" together, nor by resigning myself to the
" overwhelming influence of passion, af-
" ford the young, the thoughtless, and
" the imprudent, an example to justify
" their own improper conduct. The duty
" I owe my father I will never sacrifice to
" the gratification of my own propensities ;
" I will not again rob him of a child so

" lately found, so long deplored; I will not
" abandon his arms in the moment when
" they open with tender longings to re-
" ceive me; nor will I, under the in-
" fluence of an unhappy passion, visit
" back his early errors on his head, and
" make the crimes of the child the father's
" dreadful retribution: no, when I forsake
" my father *may God forsake me.* To you,
" oh my lord, what do I not owe to you?
" A love that formed my heart's first, best
" blessing; the sacrifice of your ambition,
" your prejudices, oh God! even of your
" filial duty, your probity, and your ho-
" nour; for me you would violate them
" all. And shall I take a treacherous ad-
" vantage of your love? shall I assist you
" to perpetuate those feuds which have so
" long disunited our families? shall I tear
" you from your father's heart, and plant
" another dagger in the wound my mo-
" ther's fatal passion inflicted? shall I se-
" duce you to sully that honour so imma-
" culate, to violate a promise so solemnly

" made, and to break the heart of an ami-
" able and affectionate woman, to whom
" you owe every thing, and who looks
" forward to a union with the object of
" her first tenderness as the consummation
" of her happiness, the reward of her
" long-tried constancy? No, my lord,
" never! And here I swear in the face of
" heaven——"

" Imogen, Imogen, drive me not mad!" wildly exclaimed the baron, snatching her clasped and uplifted hands; " make me
" not hate thy dazzling virtues. Thinkest
" thou, wondrous but insensible woman,
" that I am more or less than man, that
" thus you dare to tamper with my heart,
" my reason, and my passions? Is it thus
" thou wouldst tear thy image from my
" soul by fastening round it, even in all
" thy amiable severity, with more than all
" thy former power? Oh! if indeed thou
" wouldst teach me to sacrifice every hope
" of happiness to prudence (for reason
" exacts no such self-immolation) invoke

" me not with those melting eyes; preach
" not to me the rigid laws of fastidious
" virtue, with the look, the eloquence of
" angels; nor, whilst thou wouldst have me
" worship thee as a saint, make me adore
" thee as a woman. Recal, in mercy to
" me and (suffer me to say) *to thyself*, re-
" cal that half-breathed vow which the
" *fanaticism*, not the moderate spirit, of
" virtue elicited. Or if thou wilt not re-
" tract what thou hast already uttered, let
" that vow to heaven be—that thou art
" mine for ever."

" That, my lord, I cannot be, even on
" *your* terms, since *they* included a recan-
" tation of religion; for though thou
" knowest in the very region of superstí-
" tion I laughed at her fopperies and her
" errors, even with her professional votaries,
" yet since my public apostacy would
" wound my father's heart (deep-wedded
" to the religion of his ancestors) in its
" most vital nerve, I will not make it; for
" I am more certain it is an act of true

" religion to avoid wounding a tender pa-
" rent's heart, than I am of any speculative
" point of faith whatever."

" Then cancel that demand in thy ar-
" ticles of capitulation," said the baron with reviving spirits, " and thy God shall
" be my God. Imogen, 'tis in vain thou
" wouldst throw me from thee; for in spite
" of all thy prudent scruples thou wilt
" still be mine."

" Then, my lord," said Imogen with firmness and dignity, " claim me openly
" from my father; for the duty I owe my-
" self, independent of every other, will
" prevent me creeping meanly into a fa-
" mily which would reject me with con-
" tempt."

" Imogen, you wish to drive me to dis-
" traction, to wrench from me the hope
" of being beloved, as well as the cer-
" tainty of being rejected. Away with
" that air of proud and conscious virtue.
" No, madam, it is not *virtue*, it is indif-
" ference, which furnishes you with these

" all-prudent arguments. You bid me " claim you from your father, because you " know the count St. Dorval would spurn " me from his feet, if even there I kneeling " sued him for his daughter. By heavens, " lady, you trifle with my passion, and " use me like a froward child, now soothed " and now corrected in its follies."

The baron arose, and paced the tent in great perturbation. Imogen, trembling at his violence, held out her hand to him, and faintly smiling through her tears, exclaimed: " Oh! these *are not* your senti- " ments; that too ardent affection which " so candidly breathed its existence to " your ears cannot be doubted. Alas! " my lord, ere the secret of my heart " was unfolded to myself, thou wert its " master."

" Imogen," said the baron, calmed and softened by her tender address, and taking her offered hand, as he seated himself by her, " Imogen, forgive me; I know " not what I say. I do not, dare not,

" doubt the existence of thy affection. " Hast thou not (oh dear confession !) con- " descended to own I once might have " been *all the world to thee.* Oh ! let us " still, my lovely friend, be all the world " to each other. Thus prostrate at thy " feet let me supplicate, let me implore " thee, not to annihilate, by ill-timed cau- " tion, that wondrous happiness we might " enjoy by living for each other, and mu- " tually exerting ourselves in the cause of " virtue."

Imogen, almost overpowered by the energy, the passion, of the baron's man- ners, and by arguments but too consonant to the tone of her heart's secret wishes, yet still struggling to support herself through the difficult part that virtue and reason com- manded her to support, faintly exclaimed : " Rise, my lord ; that humiliating attitude " is mockery to me and to yourself." The baron arose : an angry blush glowed on his cheek. " Yes," continued Imogen firmly, " *we will* mutually exert ourselves in the

"cause of virtue, but that can never be "promoted by our union, except there is "a virtue in sacrificing every considera- "tion to our own desires, in breaking the "heart of a tender parent, in violating a "sacred promise, in perpetuating an here- "ditary discord, in——"

"Pardon me, madam," interrupted the baron coldly; "we are arguing on un- "equal terms: you from the head, I from "the heart, from the feelings, and cannot "stoop to sarcasm. My ideas of virtue "are not so very arbitrary as you appear "to imagine; they do not vary with the "dictates of my passion, they are perhaps "fixed and immutable as your own. I "have done; I cannot combat the so- "phistical arguments of a brain so fertile "in conjuring up phantoms to scare the "soul's most ardent wishes."

"Oh no; my dear, my best friend," exclaimed Imogen, again taking the hand he had withdrawn from hers, "give but "thy understanding a moment's sway, and

" it will tell thee what I have urged are " not *phantoms*, but the palpable beings of " *reason*'s own creation."

" And is true, fervent, and unalterable " passion," said the baron, half tenderly, half reproachfully, " so very subservient " to the influence of the understanding? " Can its vital glow chill in the heart to the " suggestion of reason, and its throbbing " pulse cease to beat when prudence com- " mands? Oh Imogen, you have never " loved—by heavens, never!"

" Never!" faintly repeated Imogen turning her melting eyes full on him with a reproachful and tender smile: " Never!"

" Oh! forgive, forgive," said the baron, pressing her folded hands to his eager lips. " Imogen, it is *you* who drive me wild; " then bear with the effects of your dan- " gerous influence. Yes, it is a heart, a " soul, tender, ardent, exalted as thine, " that is alone capable of receiving the di- " vine impression of love. Yes, you *have* " *loved*: that sublime, that profound sen-

"timent has penetrated your whole being; "even now it irradiates thy looks, glows "on thy cheek, and sheds an air of divi- "nity around thy whole person. Oh, Imo- "gen! can I then resign the precious "heart thou hast enriched me with? can "I tamely cede the inestimable felicity it "bestows on me? Think, my beloved "friend, of the ties which unite us, the "unity of our minds, the reciprocity of "our sentiments, the sympathy of our "souls, and——"

"Oh cease, my lord, in mercy cease," exclaimed Imogen in great emotion. "Why, "by these arguments which flow only "from thy heart, wouldst thou deceive "thyself and me? Consider for a moment "the barrier which fate has placed be- "tween us. No, never, never, can I be "thine."

"Never! Imogen, it is indifference only "could prompt *that* assertion. Love as- "sured by love never despairs. When "the heart reposes on the tenderness of a

" kindred heart, its fair hopes are never
" blighted. Love, mutual love, is omni-
" potent; it is its own destiny."

" When love is opposed by virtue, my
" lord, it is not omnipotent; it is only in
" alliance with it, it is all-powerful. This
" transient gust of passion over——"

" Transient gust!" repeated the baron with acrimony: "but it is well. Yet trust
" me, lady, all-indifferent and cold as now
" I see thou art, thou art not so all-
" indifferent as thou wouldst believe. No,
" whate'er thy pride may urge, thy pru-
" dence dictate, in confirming *my* misery
" *you* will not secure your own happiness.
" Imogen, Imogen, be thy heart the um-
" pire between us, and it will tell thee we
" were formed for each other. And oh, my
" too reasoning, too prudent friend, when
" by this resistance to our mutual felicity,
" destiny shall for ever, ever part us; when
" death itself can only place a stronger
" barrier between us; when we shall have
" beheld each other, heard each other, for

"the last, last time; when another shall "claim those vows *our* eyes once so fondly "interchanged; even when the diffidence "of infant love shrinks from all other "communication, and our hearts, mu-"tually thrilling with the lingering ardour "of their first immutable passion, shall "shrink from the——"

"My lord, my lord, I'll hear no more!" interrupted Imogen in an agony of mind that mingled in her countenance all the ardour of the most refined, the most glowing passion. Struggling with the nearly overpowered resolves of virtue and of reason, "Save me," she cried, while tears dried on her burning cheeks; "Oh, De "Montargis, save me from thee, from "myself."

The baron caught her in his arms. "The contest is over," he exclaimed. "These tears, these blushes are love's "own concession, and thou art mine for "ever!"

For a moment, one moment only, love

was indeed victorious. On the next, Imogen had released herself from the baron's embrace, and falling on her knees, in a solemn but rapid voice she exclaimed: "I swear by all I hold most sacred, never "to receive the baron de Montargis as my "husband, but with the mutual consent of "our parents while they live."

Then wholly overcome by the conflict, the emotion, the struggle she had sustained, she fell pale and lifeless at the baron's feet. Every feeling, every sensation in the breast of de Montargis, was absorbed in that the late effort of mind, and the situation it had thrown her into, awakened. He hung over her with the tender fears, the same intense anxiety, as the mother who trembles for the fluttering life of the infant that droops on her nurturing bosom. In delicacy to his prisoner he dared not call for assistance, and he was almost incapable of rendering any himself. Imogen, who, though overcome by corporal weakness brought on by mental sufferings,

was not senseless, made an effort to shake off the weakness that pressed her to the earth. The baron raised her in his arms. Imogen gently extricated herself, and tottered to a seat; while a faint and eloquent smile, and a slight motion of the head, seemed to deprecate that bodily infirmity in which the mind had no share.

"Fear not," said the baron in a low and affecting voice as she appeared to shrink from his approach: "thou hast nothing "more to fear from my importunity, since "I have now nothing more to hope. I will "at least endeavour to emulate that excel-"lence I dare never expect to attain. Oh, "Imogen! more omnipotent in thy virtue "than even in all the lustre of thy genius "and thy charms, I submit: thou hast "conquered. Yes, I resign thee; yet to "the end of time I shall persist in think-"ing thee mine by the most sacred ties "that bind soul to soul. In another and "a better world I will reclaim thee, and "the heaven which formed us for each

"other will then smile upon our *eternal* "*reunion.*"

The baron's voice faultered; emotion checked his utterance. Imogen wept bitterly, and extended her hand towards him. He held it for a moment alternately to his forehead and his heart; then pressing it to his lips, dropped on it a burning tear, and suddenly letting it fall, covered his face with his mantle, and rushed out of the tent.

END OF VOL. II.

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